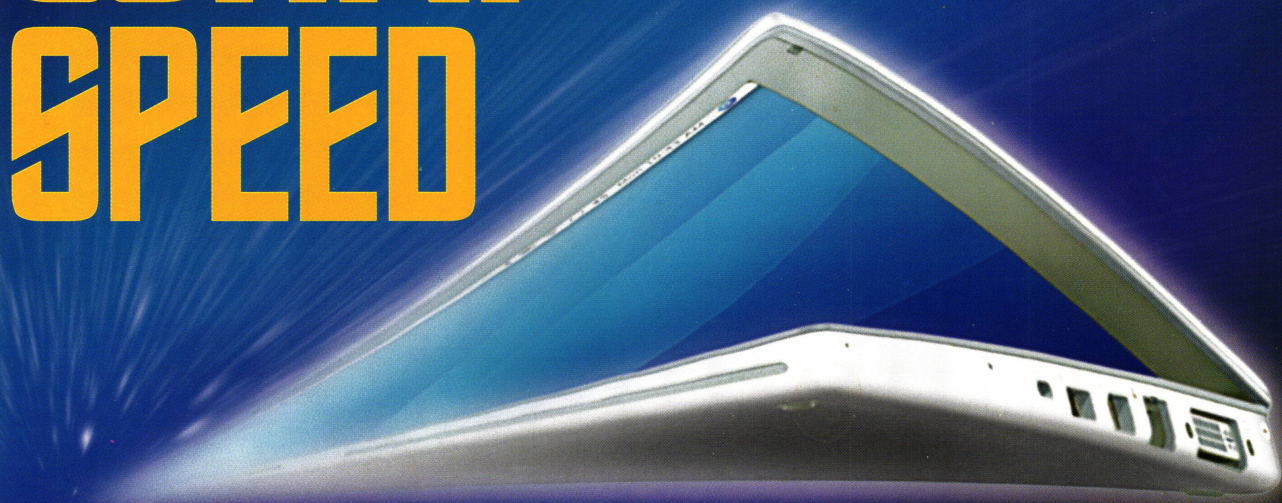


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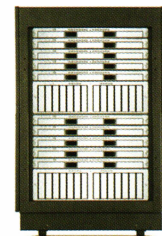
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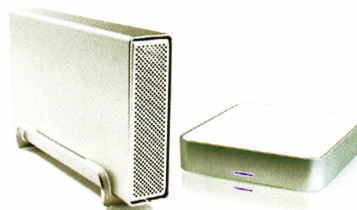
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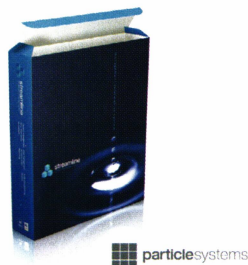
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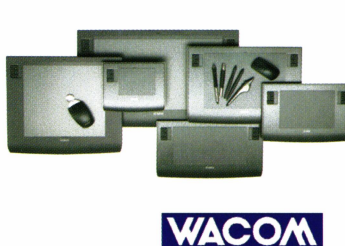
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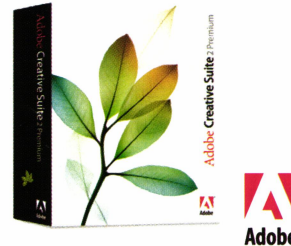
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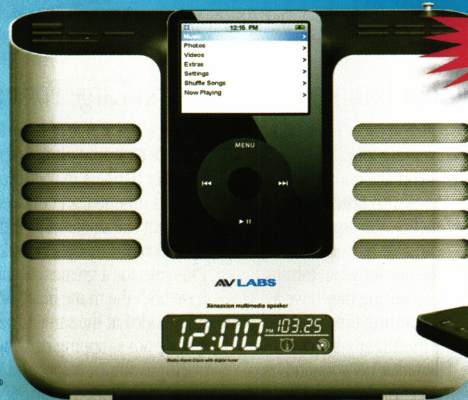
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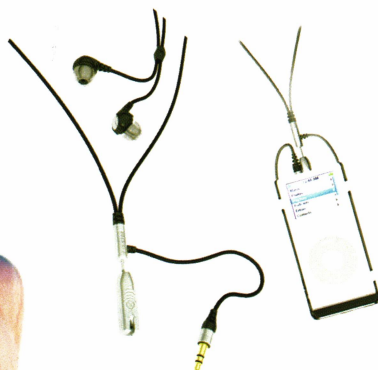
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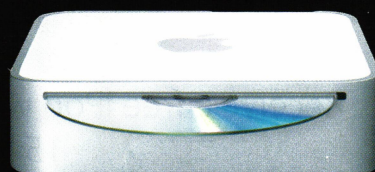
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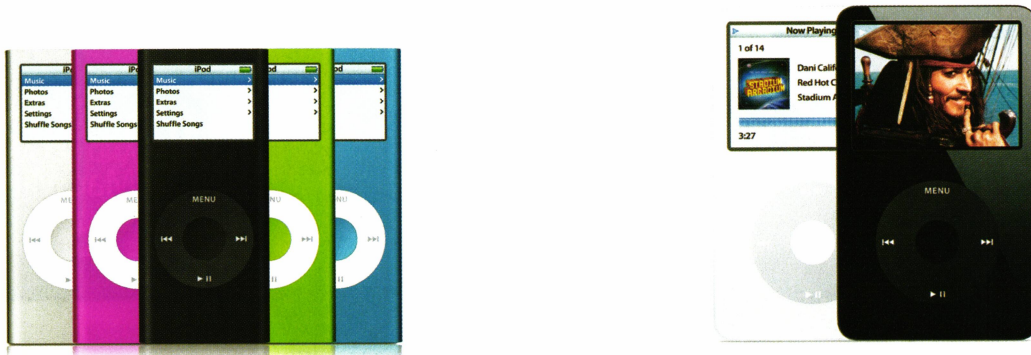
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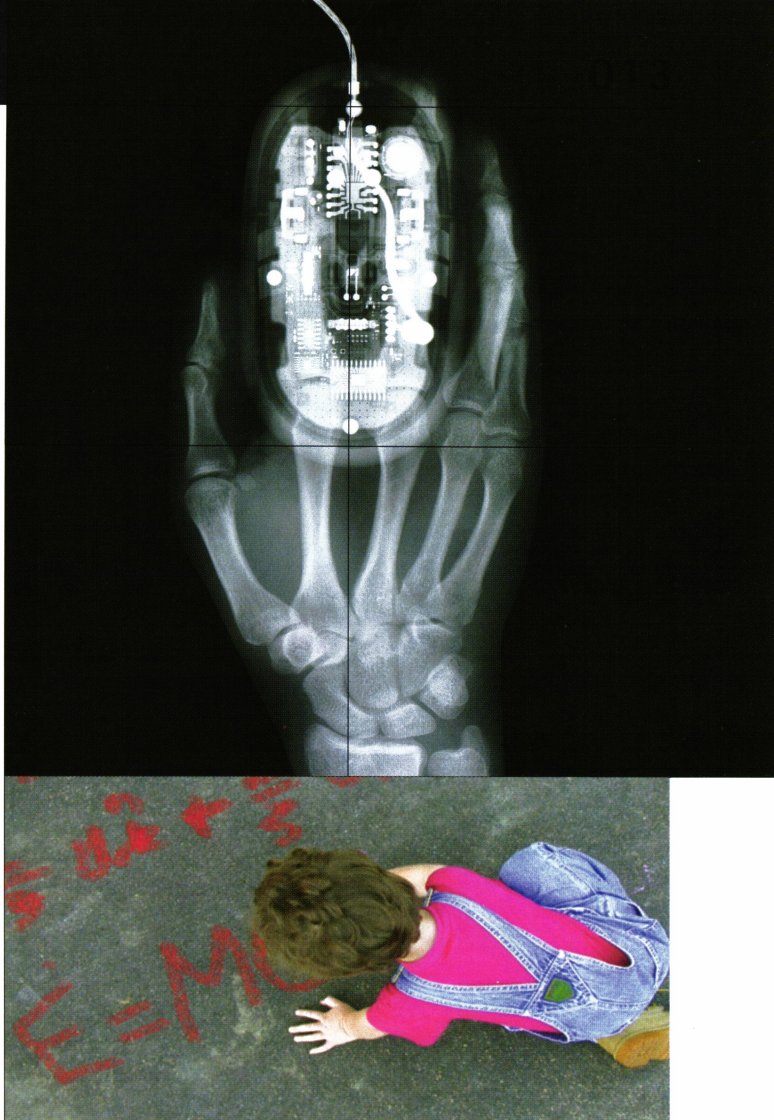
**Stretching
your mobile
Mac****By Jeff Carlson**

Today's portable Macs are engineering marvels, offering much better performance using roughly the same svelte case designs of yesterday's slower machines. However, you can't escape the laws of thermodynamics: faster processors require more power to operate, and in turn they expel more energy in the form of heat. Don't turn your back on science: you can do several things to tilt the thermodynamic balance a little more in your favour.

038

**Guide to
healthy
computing****By Franklin N Tessler**

The relationship between computers and pain, numbness, and other debilitating symptoms of repetition strain injury (RSI) is too persuasive to discount. Whether you use your computer for work or entertainment, you're at risk for developing RSI. Thankfully, you don't have to give up your Mac to stay fit.

**The Hub.****Photo.**

047

Setting up your studio at home

Music.

053

New features in iTunes 7

Mobile.

056

Mobile printers from HP and Canon

Video.

058

Pro File: live event producer Geoff King

How to.**Get more from Mail**

062

Express post

**Design for
any browser**

064

Explore Windows

Network to new music

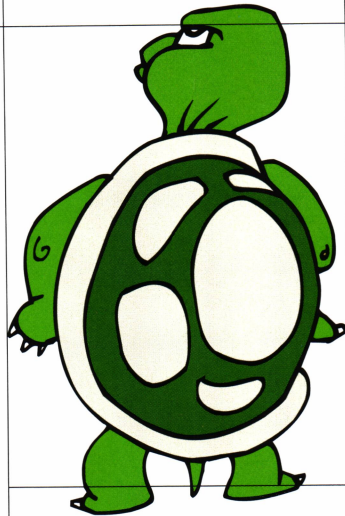
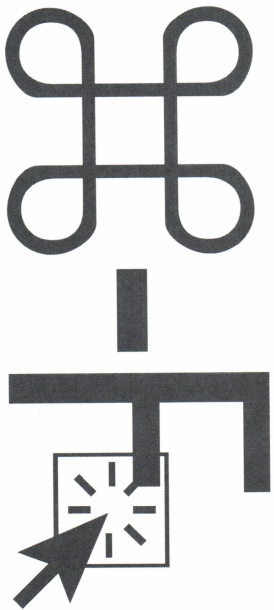
066

They're playing your song

Help folder

068

Queries and tips from our readers



Buzz.

Apple suffers for occasional irregularity 023

The ongoing investigation into irregularities in Apple's grants of executive stock options claimed a scalp last month, with former CFO Fred Anderson resigning from the board of directors. Also this month, we have another look at QuarkXPress 7, now that the Universal Binary version is available.

Interface.

Commentary 016

Mailbox 019

Off the Net 031

Re:Seller 032

NetWorth 044

Education 061

ReadMe 072

Soapbox 090

Test drive.

Sony DPP-FP55 PictureStation



Canon SELPHY CP730



Kodak EasyShare Photo Printer 500



Kodak Professional 1400



Samsung SPP-2040



Epson PictureMate 210



HP Photosmart 475



Lexmark P350



AMW lab: Compact photo printers

075

Snap shots

24-inch iMac Core 2 Duo/2.16GHz



078

Huge screen, great performance

MindManager 6



080

Spins a web of ideas

Rax 2.0



081

Helps musicians use plug-ins to play on stage and off

Montage 1.0



082

Misses the mark

Shoebox 1.6



084

Easy categorising, speedy searching



THE DAWN OF A NEW AGE

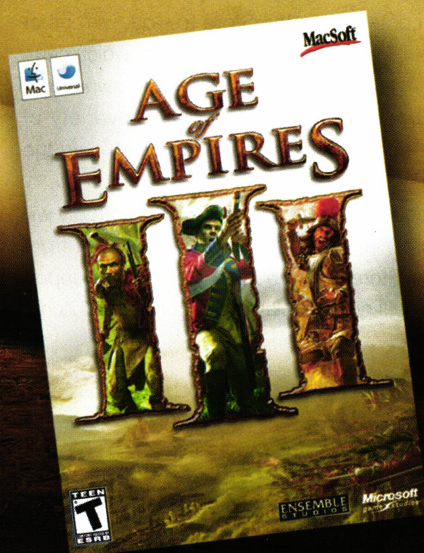
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From the Macintosh scene to the magazine.

By Matthew JC. Powell.



Hot Links

www.apple.com/au/ipod
I'm starting to like this thing

Coming Zune to a theatre near you

LAST issue, in amongst lamenting the relative paucity of iTunes Store content in Australia, I mentioned that I'd had a play with the revised versions of the iPod shuffle and iPod nano, but not the full-size iPod. I promised that when I had, I'd tell you about it.

Well, I subsequently have had a week with the thing, and I have to say, I was impressed. As many of you will know, I'm a bit of a cynic when it comes to the whole iPod thing — you might even say a curmudgeon — but the new full-size iPod (which I and others refer to as the "5.5G") answers a lot of my complaints.

I've mentioned before that I didn't like the fact that you can't switch an iPod off — you can only put it to sleep, but it's draining battery power even when it's asleep and the clickwheel is locked. With earlier iPods (even up to the 4G) you could put an iPod to sleep and still find the battery drained a day or so later.

To test the 5.5G's endurance, I left it asleep and locked for several days, checking once per evening to see how the battery was going (very scientific). After four days the battery indicator had gone down a little. Just a notch. You'd still have basically called it a full charge. Clearly Apple has done some good work on power management.

Battery life is also vastly improved. With the 5G iPod, I found that watching a feature film — say, *Butch Cassidy And The Sundance Kid*, which found its way onto the iPod completely legally and legitimately, officer — would take about two-thirds of the battery. You could still listen to some music after that, but on a long flight you wouldn't dare try to watch a second movie.

With the 5.5G, the battery had gone down maybe a quarter by the time the Bolivians opened fire.

Speaking of video, the 5.5G has a brighter screen and can handle higher-resolution content than the 5G. At least that's what Apple says. I've always had a hunch the 5G could handle higher resolutions than Apple claimed, and my totally subjective testing more or less supported that.

Using a TV show downloaded from the US Store (yes, there are ways), I watched the same content on a 5G and a 5.5G, both on the iPod and on a TV. The 5.5G looks better on the screen itself, but on the TV I was hard pressed to see the difference. Maybe it's just better compression techniques — I don't know. I wouldn't suggest throwing your 5G away for the 5.5's better video though.

The improved searching, however, is a killer feature. Before, you simply had to keep scrolling through long lists to find what you

wanted, and the longer you scrolled the faster it went, so you always — always — missed what you were after and had to go back. Now you type in a keyword using a text-entry system kind of like a label-maker. It's brilliant. It's genuinely useful (and it should be a downloadable update to the 5G, but that's just me being cynical again).

Apple has finally got the iPod right. And just in time.

Microsoft is about to enter the digital music and video player market with its Zune device. Kind of like an oversized fat iPod, the Zune features a bigger screen and a built-in FM receiver amongst its claims of iPod superiority. (Personally I think if you like FM radio why get an iPod — curmudgeon, remember).

There's been much debate about whether Zune can pose a serious threat to the iPod or not. It's not as stylish, Microsoft doesn't have Apple's cool cachet, iPod has an unassailable grip on the market, Zune's a kind of dumb name.

All of these are legitimate points (although "iPod" seemed a bit lame the first time you heard it too), but Apple shouldn't be complacent. Anyone who thinks Microsoft can't compete just because it comes to a market late should talk to Sony, Nintendo and ... just let me think for a second ... oh yeah, Sega. Not to mention Netscape ...

Up until now, Microsoft's approach to the digital music market has been to lambast Apple for locking users into the iPod/iTunes ecosystem, not allowing content from the Store to work with other players. It has spearheaded the "PlaysForSure" initiative, which certifies that content from a variety of stores encoded with its own digital rights management (DRM) software will work with a variety of players. It's all about choice, and Apple is a monopolist, said the pot to the kettle.

Once the Zune is released, interestingly enough, it reportedly will not support "PlaysForSure". You'll need to get your content from Microsoft's dedicated Zune Store. And the Zune Store won't support "PlaysForSure" either — you'll need to play your content on a Zune.

That's what I call choice. ☹

Matthew J.C. Powell

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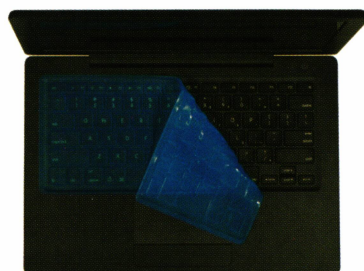
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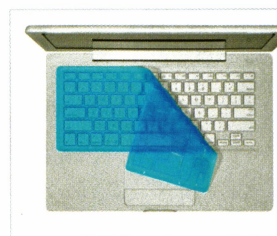
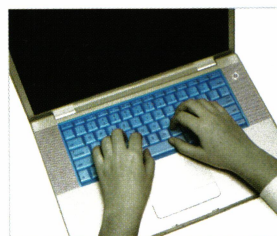
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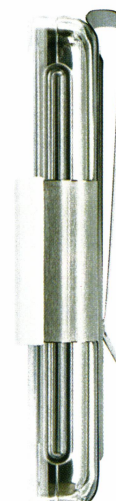
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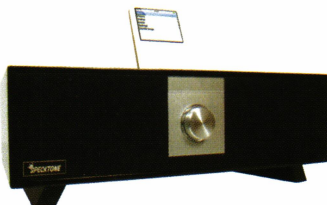
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Yamaha Sound Projector



This issue Conexus (02 9975 2799) is giving a SpeckTone Retro speaker system valued at \$250 to the *Australian Macworld* reader who sends in what we deem to be the most interesting letter. Listen to your iPod at home with this exceptional speaker system that accepts virtually all dockable iPods. All 4G, 5G, mini, and nano iPods can be placed in and played through the SpeckTone Retro dock connector. Even an iPod shuffle can be plugged in via the AUX input jack on the back of the SpeckTone Retro. The SpeckTone Retro delivers dynamic, rich sound with uncompromising quality thanks to its analogue circuitry, 4-inch subwoofer and 28 watt output. Its sleek retro design is complemented by a high-gloss lacquered wood finish. The iPod even charges when the Retro is turned on. Speck's Skintight cases (included for nano and 5G iPods) allow you to use the SpeckTone Retro without removing the case.

Speaker of the House

I was surprised to see a note (AMW Lab, 10.2006) that most Macintoshes don't have 5.1 surround sound sockets on the back panel, given they all have optical digital outputs. Indeed, for any Macintosh model except the Power Mac, optical digital is the only easily available 5.1 output.

Perhaps it is time active speaker manufacturers brought their products into the 21st Century, by providing appropriate digital inputs, as well as analogue? Especially if they intend selling to Apple owners. Certainly Apple managed a digital optical input with the iPod HiFi, although that only provides stereo. For small rooms, a Yamaha Sound Projector (see "Hot links") connects just fine to the Apple optical output to provide surround sound. Some speaker manufacturers understand the idea of home theatre on a Macintosh.

The rest of us can connect an optical 3.5mm to Toslink cable (Toslink is a very popular item at Tandy I am told) from our Macintosh to a 5.1 AV Receiver, and then to a regular set of speakers. Just remember to set the Macintosh sound output to digital.

Eric Lindsay
via internet

Thanks for the tip, Eric.
— M.J.C.P.

Letters should be e-mailed to matthew.powell@niche.com.au with a subject header of "Mailbox" or by post to *Australian Macworld* Mailbox, 3/165 Fitzroy Street, St Kilda, Victoria 3182. Letters of fewer than 200 words are given preference. We reserve the right to edit letters and probably will. To be eligible for the SpeckTone Retro prize, you must include your full name and address, including state or territory.

Perfect recall

After reading your criticism of Apple's handling of the battery recall (Buzz, 10.2006), I have nothing but praise for the way Apple handled my changeover of two batteries for a MacBook Pro. It was Monday when I registered online for the replacement batteries (I was leaving for Singapore on Thursday). On Tuesday a package arrived with the replacement batteries and two DHL courier bags for the return of the old batteries with completed consignment notes (I just need to book a pickup).

You couldn't ask for better service.

Ron Boyes
Keswick, SA

I'm glad to hear you had a good experience Ron. At the time the October issue went to press we'd heard nothing but negative reports about the way it was going. It's good to know the kinks were ironed out by the time you registered. — M.J.C.P.

No good time

I could sympathise with you, on reading your 08.2006 commentary!

I have an 800MHz G4 12-inch iBook, with OS X 10.3.9, which is working very well, but I am starting to run out of HD space (it's only a 30G) and I wish I had a SuperDrive. I've been toying with the idea of buying a second-hand 12-inch PowerBook G4, with a decent hard drive and a SuperDrive, using that for a year or two, and then upgrading to a 13-inch MacBook when Merom and Blu-Ray have been sorted, and Leopard has been out long enough to iron out the bugs.

What do you think of my cunning plan? Any suggestions?

Rob Herweynen
via internet

Not a bad plan, Rob, especially if you are able to get two good years out of the PowerBook (and I have no doubt you will). By then there may well be Merom chips in MacBooks (they'll be in MacBook Pros first, and I doubt there'll be a small-screen MacBook Pro but you never know) and fingers crossed the hi-def wars will have been resolved. Of course, by then there'll be some other new and fantastic thing just around the corner, any day now ... — M.J.C.P.

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.Mac: .Pro ...

We have in the family four networked Macs. As a family we have absolutely no interest in computing, but all love what we can do with them. For this reason I have extended warranty on all the machines, so at the first sign of any trouble I phone tech support. Purchasing a .Mac membership is simply an extension of the same logic. For a small annual outlay I get close to the same computing environment as the corporate world without having to mess around finding bits from here and there and play at being IT specialist. I want my computing to be like my car: turn the key and drive it. I look forward to the day when the IT cart-track genuinely becomes a super highway. The Mac environment is about driving a smart European car, not a hot-rod.

Martin Butcher
Belmont, Vic.

What about us?

I have read US web sites explain how great the Nike + iPod kit is, so I thought I might buy a couple. It's not in Apple Australia's online Store. It's on the US and UK Stores, but neither of them will ship to Australia. So unless I know someone in the USA or UK who can buy send me one I have no way of using this new product.

When iTV comes out I'm sure once again we either will not

I signed up to .Mac in July this year. Basically I wanted to create a family web site. The initial version took about five hours work. Since then I have tweaked some bits and pieces. For little effort we have a web site that suits our purposes.

I have started using .Mac mail. Being able to have alias accounts works for me. All my mail goes to my main account but is quickly differentiated by colour. I know where mail comes from and can prioritise opening and trashing easily.

Previously doing a backup using Superduper or Carbon Copy Cloner was a little complicated. Today I use Backup and it reminds me to do follow-up backups. Straightforward.

Is it worth \$140? It suits me.

Bruce Kremer
via internet

get the product or will only be able to use half of its features.

Who do you point the finger at?

Stuart Carter
Geelong, Victoria

Finger-pointing would be fun, of course. More useful would be knowing that the Nike + iPod kit will be available in Australia shortly after this issue reaches you. As for iTV? We will see. We will see. — M.JC.P.

... .Con

Dan Warne's NetWorth in the 08.2006 issue was indeed a timely article. I had signed up for the free trial .mac account way back in June. The iDisk icon is sitting happily on my desktop. After setting it up and using iWeb to post a small blog entry it has since sat idle. Here's why:

I have a del.ic.io.us account. All my bookmarks are stored and tagged and catalogued for future reference. I have a pro account with Flickr costing \$40 a year, roughly. If my family were so inclined they could see only the pictures I allowed them to see. I have my own domain, for which I pay (or will soon be paying) substantially less than the price Apple is charging. My Sony Ericsson phone syncs nicely with my address book and iCal.

The cost of Apple's service needs to drop through the floor before I would consider dropping all the other services I use.

Now, how do I delete that pesky little icon from my desktop?

Stuart Murdoch
Sunshine, Vic.

Sounds like .Mac was never an appropriate product for you, Stuart, so I'm not surprised you don't feel you're getting value from it. To remove the icon, by the way, go into System Preferences and open up the .Mac pane. Then click on iDisk and untick the box that says "Create a local copy of your iDisk". — M.JC.P.

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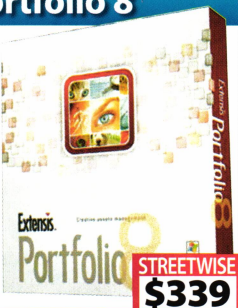
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Former CFO resigns after investigation

AFTER Apple announced the results of a three-month investigation into the company's stock option practices, former Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Fred Anderson announced that he "believes it is in Apple's best interests" for him to resign from the company's board of directors.

"I apologise to Apple's shareholders and employees for these problems, which happened on my watch," said Apple CEO Steve Jobs. "They are completely out of character for Apple. We will now work to resolve the remaining issues as quickly as possible and to put the proper remedial measures in place to ensure that this never happens again."

Apple first uncovered stock option irregularities in June, 2006 – one of many companies during the same time period that was involved in irregular stock option offerings. The company back-dated stock option grants to senior executives, meaning that grants could be artificially issued at times when the stock price was low then cashed in when the stock had improved. Shortly thereafter the company was sued by stockholders.

The company delayed filing required financial reports with the US Security & Exchange Commission and ultimately requested a hearing with the NASDAQ stock exchange Listing Qualifications Panel to address the issue. Analysts doubted at the time that the

investigation would have much of an impact on Apple's upcoming product release schedule.

In a statement announcing Fred Anderson's resignation from its Board of Directors, Apple said the special committee found no misconduct by any member of the company's current management team. The committee found that the most recent evidence of irregularities related to a January 2002 grant. A total of 15 option grants dated between 1997 and 2002 appear to have grant dates that preceded the approval of those grants.

What's more, the committee has learned that Apple CEO Steve Jobs himself was aware that favourable grant dates had been selected, but said that he didn't receive or benefit from those grants and "was unaware" of the accounting implications.

"The investigation raised serious concerns regarding the actions of two former officers in connection with the accounting, recording and reporting of stock option grants. The company will provide all details regarding their actions to the SEC," said the company in a statement. Apple has already said it will restate its earnings for several historic periods covered by the investigation.

Anderson served as CFO from 1996 until 2004, when he yielded his position to current CFO Peter Oppenheimer. Long-time Apple observers may also recall that in July of 1997, when the board ousted then-CEO Gil Amelio, Anderson was named the company's interim CEO – though it's unclear how long, if at all, he actually acted in that capacity before Steve Jobs took over. In June of 2004, only a few days after he retired, it was announced that Anderson had accepted a seat on Apple's board of directors.

Apple's board now consists of Steve Jobs, Bill Campbell of accounting software maker Intuit, Millard Drexler of clothing manufacturer J. Crew, Arthur Levinson of biotech researcher Genentech, venture capitalist Jerry York, Google CEO Eric Schmidt and former US vice president Al Gore. — *Peter Cohen*



■ PHOTOGRAPHY



Hot Links

www.apple.com/au/aperture
labs.adobe.com/technologies/lightroom
 The contenders

There's room enough for both Aperture and Lightroom

WHEN Adobe followed the November 2005 release of Apple's Aperture photo management app by putting out a beta of Lightroom, a workflow tool for professional photographers, the stage was set for a battle over the digital photography space between two tech industry giants.

The battle lines seemed to come into focus a little more in September, as both Apple and Adobe made news with their photo workflow tools. Apple announced a free update to Aperture that gives users storage options and adds integrated support with iLife '06 and iWork '06. Meanwhile, Adobe offered more details about Lightroom, highlighted by its decision to rebrand the app as Photoshop Lightroom (see the sidebar "What's in the room").

Anyone expecting a fight to the finish over the professional photography market may wind up disappointed. Analysts say there's more than enough business to go around for both Apple and Adobe and their respective applications.

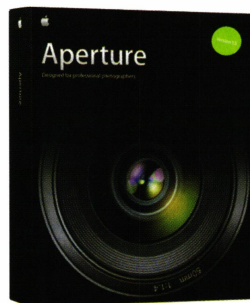
"I don't see it as a win-lose situation because [Aperture and Lightroom] have different strengths," said JupiterResearch Senior Analyst Joe Wilcox.

Indeed, both Aperture and Lightroom have distinct strengths that will appeal to different segments of the photography market. Take Aperture, which brings Apple's trademark ease-of-use to a complex task.

"What Apple does well is make its applications seem familiar to users and then extends the capabilities," Wilcox said. "A photographer using Aperture will find the workflow to be familiar, like the way the application uses the loupe or light table. Apple's approach to any product is to emphasise simplicity and hide complexity – Aperture does that very well."

Aperture focuses on the professional photographer making the transition to digital imaging – an area that had gone unserved by other applications until Aperture's arrival. By including digital equivalents of many tools those professionals used everyday, Apple has successfully carved out a market for its new program.

"Apple did change the market by focusing on the needs of the professionals," said Chris Swenson, director of software industry analysis for market-research firm NPD. "Even though some of the technology wasn't brand new the package that Apple delivered was."



Adobe, on the other hand, has its own advantages, not the least of which is its dominance with Photoshop. By putting the Photoshop moniker on Lightroom, the app could become the default digital workflow application on the strength of Photoshop's reputation and prominence among photographers.

Lightroom is also a cross-platform application, which could affect the purchase of the product in the future. "It's very reasonable to expect these products could be used in a cross-platform environment and that is a big advantage for Adobe," Wilcox said.

Still, analysts say the beta software needs some improvements before its slated release early next year. "I don't see the workflow features in Lightroom being as strong as Aperture, but the editing features are more straight forward," Wilcox added.

NPD's Swenson adds that Adobe's component-based system in Lightroom gives it a slight edge over Aperture, although the version 1.5 update includes a plug-in architecture that allows third-party developers to tap into Aperture.

Regardless of the two programs' respective strengths, Swenson notes there are clear similarities in how both look as well as the tasks each one performs. And with the market for photography

workflow apps still relatively new, users are more likely to try both Aperture and Lightroom for the time being.

"It's going to be hard in the short term for Aperture to sell because Adobe Lightroom is free," Swenson said. "We'll have to wait until Adobe sets the price on Lightroom to see how it all shakes out."

"Apple deserves credit for redefining this industry, but it's a wide open market," he added. "Apple definitely changed the market, but Adobe is catching up." — *Jim Dalrymple*

What's in the room

With the beta 4 release of Lightroom, Adobe has rebadged the software Photoshop Lightroom and has united the product feature set for both Mac and Windows platforms. Still a public beta, Photoshop Lightroom is expected to make its official release in early 2007.

Also new to this release are precision white balance selection options and a streamlined user interface with customisable controls. Tone curve adjustment features have been added, and enhancements have been made to the Develop and Library models. Users can rename and convert files to Adobe's Digital Negative (DNG) format after importing into the Lightroom library. Filters, search presets and organising options have been improved.

New camera models supported by this release include the Nikon D2Xs, Sony A100, preliminary support for the Canon EOS 400D and Nikon D80.

Final system requirements are yet to be established, but this beta version requires Mac OS X v10.4.3 or later, 1GHz G4, G5 or faster, including Intel (Lightroom is a Universal binary for Intel-based Macs); 768MB RAM and 1GB hard disk space. — *Peter Cohen*

■ LITIGATION



Hot Links

www.apple.com/au
Home of pod people

Apple brings pod wars down under

APPLE'S ongoing struggle for control of the word "pod" has finally reached Australian shores. In recent times, a number of overseas companies with names like TightPod, Profit Pod and Securipod have received letters from Apple's legal eagles alleging that their use of the word "pod" could potentially cause customers to believe that they were in some way affiliated with Apple. This despite the fact that some of these companies don't market technology products.

A number of local companies have lately been issued with similar letters. Those targeted

include companies with brands like LPod, BPod, ePod and mPod, as well as DigiPod.

Most of the companies involved are small operations without the legal muscle required to take on Apple, so they simply comply with the letters. TigerSpike, the company which owns the mPod brand (a mobile content delivery service), is reportedly planning to fight, but doesn't hold out much hope — despite the fact that Apple does not actually own the trademark on the word "pod".

In Australia, "pod" has been owned since 1999 by an American company called Line 6. Apple's attempts to take ownership of "pod" will necessarily involve a protracted negotiation or court battle with Line 6, which has not issued legal warnings to any other companies attempting to use the word.

Mobile phone maker Dopod, which launched in Australia last month, is a potential target for Apple's wrath. AMW attended the launch of Dopod's Australian operation, and couldn't help noticing that the three speakers all had different pronunciations of the name. Is it "Doe-Pod," "Doo-Pod" or "Doo-Poe"? Maybe a wrangle with Apple is just what they need to figure out what the company's name is. — Matthew JC. Powell



Endangered icon. Macropods, such as kangaroos and wallabies, may have to find a new name.



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■ SECURITY



Hot Links

www.symantec.com/transactsafely
Understand the risks

Norton Confidential aims to protect

THERE are hardly any viruses written for Mac OS X, and spyware is pretty much non-existent on this platform. Therefore, you don't need to have any security software on your machine.

If you believe that I've got a bridge you may be interested in buying.

The fact is that, though there are few viruses that will affect your Mac, you can still unwittingly spread Windows viruses in the course of exchanging documents with your cross-platform friends. Anti-virus software is just good citizenship.

More pressing, perhaps, is the fact that the fastest-growing computer security issue is not at all platform-specific. Phishing – fake e-mails and fake web sites designed to fool users into handing over banking and other financial details – has skyrocketed over the past twelve months and shows no sign of slowing down. Everyone is as vulnerable as everyone else, and the bad guys are getting very clever – it can be extremely difficult to tell a fake web site from the real thing.

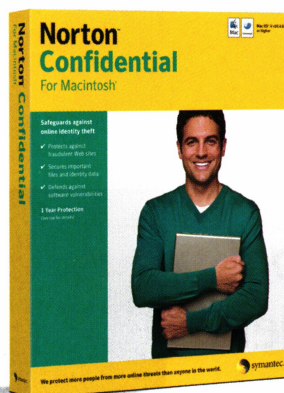
The traditional advice – “don't open e-mails that claim to be from your bank because banks won't contact you by e-mail” – isn't so effective in the long term, since it essentially locks banks out from ever communicating with their customers.

So what's the solution? Symantec thinks it has an answer in the form of Norton Confidential, software designed to detect potential scams and warn users at the point when they're trying to make a transaction.

Here's how it works: you go to a web site, either by clicking on a link on another site or by clicking a link in an e-mail. Confidential checks the site against its database of known phishing sites and warns you by basically blocking the screen. In addition to the “blacklist” Confidential also uses heuristics to figure out on the basis of various criteria how likely it is that the site you're looking at is fake. The heuristic check is especially valuable, since phishing web sites are known to pop up and disappear again within days or even hours.

There's also an authentication system in place whereby Confidential recognises a number of well-known and popular banking and e-commerce sites, and gives the user a green light to proceed when it's found one of these.

In addition, Confidential protects your computer against spyware and other malicious software that may crop up. Mike Romo, Symantec's product manager for the Macintosh platform, told *AMW* that there isn't any such software on OS X at the moment, but there's no reason to think it won't ever appear.



Romo says that the OS X version of Confidential isn't designed to be identical to the Windows version, but rather “to echo the good stuff and shape it into a Mac-relevant application”. It has a different user interface to the Windows version, and also some unique features.

For instance, the OS X version integrates with Spotlight, so you can search for individual files and then, within the Spotlight

interface, protect those files from prying eyes. Romo says this is handy because many OS X users run their Macs in single-user mode despite sharing with multiple users.

While the Windows version requires Internet Explorer, the Mac version requires Firefox (if you don't already have it, Firefox is installed at the same time as you install Confidential). This is because the program makes use of the plug-in architecture of Firefox. Moro says Symantec is working with Apple on support for Safari, but says Apple “plays their cards close to their chest” and doesn't like people digging around in Safari's source code. Nonetheless, he says, there is a close relationship between the two companies when it comes to security.

“Apple understands that a lot of people know about Intel,” he says. With the move to Intel chips, the company is “moving into a bigger environment and people are more comfortable hacking around. Security warrants a second look”.

Norton Confidential will be available in November.

— Matthew JC. Powell

■ HISTORY



Hot Links

www.imug.com.au
Internet Macintosh User Group

Macs on show

MUSEUM Victoria will next month host an exhibition showing how Apple computer has revolutionised the way ordinary people do things.

It's the work an enthusiastic group at iMug, the Internet Macintosh User Group in Melbourne, which has collected an array of donated items for display in the museum's community collections area.

They range from a replica of the original Apple 1 computer – built by member Brian Livingston and his son, Campbell – to a Lisa, an Apple II, collections of games and peripherals, through to the latest Macs. The story will be told via five so-called “revolutions”, which made it easier for people to use personal computing, desktop publishing, produce images, make videos and make music and other sounds.

The exhibition, at the modern museum in Melbourne's Carlton Gardens, will be open from December 2–30. — Noel Jackling

■ USERS AND GROUPS



Hot Links

matthew.powell@niche.com.au

Got a group you want listed? Drop a line

Mac user group meetings and events for November

Wed 1

ClubMac [NSW]

www.clubmac.org.au

Toowoomba Apple & Mac UG (TAAMUG)

www.taamug.org.au

Coffs Harbour Mac User Group
groups.yahoo.com/group/coffs_mac_users

Thu 2

TasMac

groups.yahoo.com/group/tasmug

Fri 3

SAAUC [SA]

www.saauc.org.au

Southern Highlands (SHMUG) [NSW]

www.shcug.org.au

Sat 4

AUSOM Incorporated [VIC]

www.ausom.net.au/nextmeeting.html

Mon 6

AMUG [NSW]

homepage.mac.com/sydamug

Gold Coast Macintosh User Group [QLD]

www.goldcoastmacusers.org.au

MacTalk — Newcastle & The

Hunter Macintosh User Group [NSW]

groups.yahoo.com/group/MacTalk

Tue 7

WAMUG [WA]

www.wamug.org.au

Wed 8

Bellarine Mac User Group

(BMUG) [VIC]

www.bellarinemac.org.au

\$2 Entry

SAAUC [SA]

www.saauc.org.au

Club Mac [NSW]

www.clubmac.org.au

Retirees & Others [VIC]

Excel

www.ausom.net.au/retirees.html

Sat 11

AMUG [NSW]

Beginners Mac Workshop

homepage.mac.com/sydamug

Free for Members

(\$22 non-members)

Sun 12

Gold Coast Apple Users Group [QLD]

home.worldlink.com.au/appleserv/GCUsers.html

Mon 13

North Queensland Macintosh Users Group (NQMUG) [QLD]

www.nqmug.org

Macintosh Users Group

Sunshine Coast (MUGSUNCO) [QLD]

www.mugsunco.org.au

Tue 14

ACTApple [ACT]

www.actapple.org.au/Pages/Meetings/Meetings.html

Macintosh Multimedia Group [VIC]

www.imug.com.au

www.ausom.net.au/multi-media.html

Sun 19

Apple-Q [QLD]

www.apple-q.org.au/meeting.php

Tue 21

SMUG [NSW]

www.sydney.macusersgroup.org

Wed 22

iMug FileMaker Developers [VIC]

www.imug.com.au

Thu 23

Central Victorian Mac Users [VIC]

www.cvmu.net

Sat 25

Geraldton MUG [WA]

gmug.wamug.org.au

Sun 26

Apple-Q [QLD]

www.apple-q.org.au/training.php

\$20/\$30 (requires membership)

Tue 28

ACTApple [ACT]

www.actapple.org.au/Pages/Meetings/Meetings.html

iMug [VIC]

AGM & MYOB

www.imug.com.au

Thu 30

BEAUT [VIC]

Christmas Shopping Lists & Gift Ideas/iTunes Store

www.beaut.org.au

• List compiled by Nicholas Pyers



External Drives



Flash/Promotional Drives



* Minimum Qty 50

Memory



Portable Drives



Scanners



Hard Drives



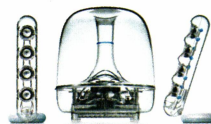
Software



Batteries



Sound



Displays



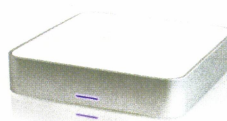
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■ TEST DRIVE UPDATE



Hot Links

www.quark.com
Home of XPress

Universal QuarkXPress faster, but only on Intel Macs

THE desktop publishing community eagerly awaited QuarkXPress 7.01, one of the first major non-Apple programs to be delivered in Universal format. Now that this free update to the non-Universal XPress 7.0 is available, does it deliver on the company's "fast as hell" promise?

Yes and no.

We compared the relative speed of three versions of Quark — 7.01, 7.0, and 6.5, as well as Adobe InDesign CS2 — on four systems, a 2.66GHz (standard configuration) Mac Pro, a 1.66GHz Intel Core Duo Mac mini, a dual 2.7GHz Power Mac G5, and a 500MHz Power Mac G4. Overall, the results were mixed and performance gains you get will vary based on the tasks you perform.

No rating change. We did not change the three-mouse rating for the program as a whole, as the rating was mostly based on the program's features, which have not changed with version 7.01. We did not penalise version 7.0 for not being Intel native. The original review (Test drive, 09.2006) noted the program's sluggish performance on Intel Macs and the company's promise of

the forthcoming Universal version. The Universal QuarkXPress 7.01, which shipped in August, eliminates the sluggish performance on the Intel platform, but XPress 7.01 is even slower than version 7.0 on Power Macs.

The results. On the Mac Pro, XPress 7.01 handily beats XPress 7.0 — nearly doubling its performance on computation-intensive activities such as screen rendering and image manipulation. It also performs modestly better — about 22 percent — than the non-Intel-native XPress 6.5. It remains half as fast as the non-native InDesign CS2 for these procedures. For our two disk-oriented tests, XPress 7.01 on the Mac Pro outpaces XPress 7.0 by about 54 percent, XPress 6.5 by about 13 percent, and InDesign CS2 by about 28 percent.

The speedup on the Mac mini was less impressive: In our tests, XPress 7.01 ran about 30 percent faster than XPress 7.0 on computation-intensive tasks and was noticeably slower than both XPress 6.5 and InDesign CS2. For the disk-intensive tests, XPress 7.01 was 30 percent faster than XPress 7.0, but half the speed of XPress 6.5. XPress 7.01 on the Mac mini was 50 percent faster than InDesign CS2 for these tests.

If you work on a Power Mac, version 7.01 will significantly slow down XPress operations. In our computation-intensive tests on the G5 system, there was about a 31 percent performance hit with XPress 7.01, compared to 7.0. XPress 6.5 clocked in at about twice as fast as XPress 7.01, and InDesign CS2 clocked in about 3.5 times as fast. An older G4 system showed a 27 percent hit with XPress 7.01 compared to 7.0, while XPress 6.5 ran 3.3 times as fast as 7.01, and InDesign CS2 ran 4.3 times as fast as 7.01. In the disk-intensive tests on the PowerPC systems, we also saw significant slowdowns in XPress 7.01, though they were not as dramatic as in the computation-intensive tests. On the G5, XPress 7.01 took about a 36 percent hit compared to versions 7.0, and a

Publishing speed tests

| | CPU-intensive tasks | | | | Disk-intensive tasks | | |
|---|---------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|------------|-------------------|
| | Launch and open | Replace and reflow | Apply irregular wrap | Apply transparency | Import word file | Create PDF | Import 200MB TIFF |
| Mac Pro (dual 2.66GHz Xeon) | | | | | | | |
| QuarkXPress 7.01 | 14.9 | 3.5 | 1.3 | 4.7 | 0.7 | 31.8 | 4.4 |
| QuarkXPress 7.0 | 26.9 | 7.4 | 2.6 | 8.4 | 1.5 | 44.2 | 7.6 |
| QuarkXPress 6.5 | 27.6 | 3.3 | 1.1 | NA* | 0.6 | 25.7 | 8.3 |
| InDesign CS2 | 24.4 | 0.9 | 1.9 | 1.1 | 1.0 | 29.9 | 8.8 |
| Mac mini (1.66GHz core duo) | | | | | | | |
| QuarkXPress 7.01 | 17.5 | 4.9 | 2.0 | 8.2 | 0.8 | 43.4 | 7.4 |
| QuarkXPress 7.0 | 40.1 | 16.2 | 3.5 | 4.6 | 2.1 | 82.7 | 5.3 |
| QuarkXPress 6.5 | 43.0 | 4.4 | 1.0 | NA* | 1.2 | 36.9 | 2.4 |
| InDesign CS2 | 38.0 | 4.3 | 3.1 | 1.4 | 2.9 | 49.9 | 16.0 |
| Power Mac G5 (dual 2.7GHz PowerPC) | | | | | | | |
| QuarkXPress 7.01 | 23.1 | 4.8 | 2.5 | 4.8 | 1.0 | 44.6 | 4.6 |
| QuarkXPress 7.0 | 8.5 | 4.5 | 1.7 | 5.2 | 0.9 | 25.7 | 4.7 |
| QuarkXPress 6.5 | 16.8 | 3.0 | 0.7 | NA* | 0.9 | 19.4 | 4.7 |
| InDesign CS2 | 9.8 | 0.5 | 1.1 | 0.6 | 1.5 | 18.8 | 6.5 |
| Power Mac G4 (500MHz PowerPC) | | | | | | | |
| QuarkXPress 7.01 | 78.8 | 17.3 | 8.4 | 22.5 | 3.4 | 167.1 | 18.7 |
| QuarkXPress 7.0 | 39.3 | 19.8 | 2.8 | 23.0 | 2.5 | 119.4 | 19.6 |
| QuarkXPress 6.5 | 46.6 | 3.7 | 1.4 | NA* | 1.2 | 38.9 | 21.2 |
| InDesign CS2 | 28.3 | 3.9 | 2.8 | 1.5 | 3.0 | 52.4 | 27.0 |

All times in seconds. Best results in red. Tests conducted three times each, timed to 0.01 seconds, with averages rounded to 0.1 seconds.

* Feature not supported in QuarkXPress 6.5.

65 percent hit compared to version 6.5. Compared to InDesign CS2, it took a 54 percent hit. On the G4, the slowdown was significant but less dramatic: XPress 7.01 took an 18 percent hit versus 7.0, and ran at about 40 percent of the speed of 6.5. Compared to InDesign CS, it was about half as fast.

Quark's response. Quark acknowledges that XPress 7.01 runs more slowly on PowerPC systems than version 7.0 does. Senior Product Marketing Manager Marc Horne recommends that PowerPC users stick with version 7.0, since the functionality is identical. If you've already installed 7.01 on your Power Mac, he recommends that you reinstall version 7.0 (that won't count against your limit on installed licenses). Horne says that the reason for the PowerPC slowdown is that Quark is using a new compiler tool to generate its software and that its engineers haven't yet gained the experience to optimise performance using the new tool. He says that as Quark's developers gain more experience with the compiler tool, they'll be able to better optimise the code, and they will include that improved code with the updates and bug fixes that Quark issues in the future. Horne says this should narrow the performance gap between the PowerPC and Intel versions over time.

As to why the performance boost on Intel Macs (and the corresponding drop on PowerPC) varies on different Mac models, Horne attributes that to better data buses, graphics engines, and other motherboard components on newer Macs. He points out that such new components aid some operations, especially since the compilers used to generate the shipping software are typically optimised for the latest hardware. Older hardware tends to get less attention by the tool developers, so specific functions don't get the tweaks needed to run at their best speed.

Testing methodology. The tests we used for QuarkXPress 7.0 are variations of tests that Macworld has used in the

publishing arena for about 15 years. The seven tests represent different aspects typical of publishing software.

Five tests are computationally intensive, stressing the Macs' chip, memory, and graphics subsystems and the code that interacts with them.

The other two tests – Create PDF and Import 200MB TIFF – primarily test how the software works with the Mac's storage systems. While there are some computations involved, the bulk of the effort is to gauge how well the software interacts with the file system.

To calculate our overall performance scores, we average the results of the tests, giving each test identical weight. We average the relative performance, not the number of seconds, for each test. Because we have two disk-intensive tests and five computation-intensive tests, the computation-intensive tests account for approximately 71 percent of the overall score – reflecting the fact that designers tend to work on their layouts' design and contents much more than they import and export files from them.

We collaborated with Quark on tweaking our original tests for version 7.01. Quark had opined that some of our tests – importing a 200MB TIFF file, wrapping text around a five-point star overlaid on a three-column text page, and applying transparency to that large TIFF file – are extreme and unrepresentative. However, we don't believe that to be the case. Our test files are not especially complex, and are similar to a typical newsletter, so that we can accurately reproduce them across a range of products and versions. Moreover, as with all software reviews, it's important to stretch the applications to test their capabilities.

The bottom line. It really matters which computer you use when running QuarkXPress 7; Intel-based XPress 7 users should definitely update to version 7.01; PowerPC users should definitely stay away from this update; and QuarkXPress 7 is not an undisputed speed demon in any scenario. — *Galen Gruman*



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■ WEB



Hot Links

www.adobe.com/products/contribute
Used to be Macromedia

Contribute 4 adds blogging



BLOGGERS will get a boost with the latest version of Contribute, the web publishing tool released by Adobe. Contribute 4 integrates blog publishing features into the web site maintenance and management tool aimed at business users.

Other additions in this major upgrade include unified web publishing and Flash Video support. However, Contribute 4 will not run natively on Intel-based Macs; it will run using Apple's Rosetta emulation technology.

In an effort to make it easy to post to existing blogs, Adobe has enabled Contribute to seamlessly connect to some of the most popular blog servers. Currently Contribute supports connections to Blogger, Typepad and WordPress.

"Bloggers with personal and work blogs will be very happy with Contribute 4," said Marc Hosein, Adobe Group Product Marketing Manager. "We are targeting bloggers that are writing blogs as part

of their jobs or business, because we already have a relationship with the admins at many companies."

Because Contribute integrates with fellow Adobe (and former Macromedia) app Dreamweaver, site administrators can give authoring permissions to Contribute users, while maintaining web site integrity, and look-and-feel, even when multiple authors update content across the site.

"We are in a unique position because we share the same rendering engine with Dreamweaver," Hosein said. This gives admins control over what can be updated and still have control over the web site."

Adobe believes that Contribute will catch on with many different types of bloggers because the application can now handle management of multiple blogs. Users at work can update their business blogs and then go home and write something for their personal blogs.

Adobe has also enhanced Contribute's rich media support, allowing users to drag and drop images, movies, and now Flash video files into web pages or blog entries.

The practise of blogging continues to be on the rise, studies show. A Jupiter Research study forecasts that two out of three companies will run blogs by the end of next year – 35 percent of the companies surveyed by Jupiter said they would be deploying blogs in the next 12 months.

Contribute 4 is available immediately for Mac OS X 10.3.9 or later for \$259. Registered users of qualifying earlier versions can upgrade for \$149. Adobe did not say whether or when an update adding Universal compatibility with Intel-based Macs was forthcoming. — *Jim Dalrymple*

■ BRIEFS



Hot Links

video.google.com
www.youtube.com
All the video you can shake \$US1.46b at
www.icalamus.net/?lan=en
An alternative DTP solution

Google to acquire YouTube

AS we went to press, Google and YouTube jointly announced that the search giant would be acquiring the video-sharing community site in a stock deal valued at \$US1.46 billion. Google entered the online video scene a couple of years ago, but its cautious approach – ensuring that no-one's copyrights were violated – was quickly overtaken when YouTube appeared last year with its free-for-all approach. In recent months YouTube has often been talked about as an acquisition target, but was regarded as a "poison pill" because of the possibility that any new owner would be targeted by lawsuits from copyright owners. Google presumably has the industry ties and deep pockets required to weather such a storm, should it arise. — *M.JC.P.*

iCalamus arrives on Mac

ANYONE who's old enough might remember the short-lived Atari ST computer platform, which was positioned as a "Mac killer" when launched in the mid-1980s but disappeared by the mid-1990s. In its time, it enjoyed some modest success in the publishing market thanks to a program called Calamus. With the demise of the ST, Calamus migrated to Windows, and has only now landed on Mac OS X, rebadged as "iCalamus". Positioned somewhere between Apple's Pages and full-blown professional packages like Quark or InDesign, iCalamus can be had for €99 and a demo version is available for download (see "Hot links"). — *M.JC.P.*

MacBook Pros may be imminent

IT'S a bit of a non-story really, but if we didn't say something we'd miss out completely. At press time, several Mac rumour sites were reporting that supplies of MacBook Pros in the channel were becoming thin on the ground. Speculation is rife that this indicates Apple's long-anticipated ramp up to using Core 2 Duo chips in the machines may happen sooner rather than later – even by the time this issue hits the stands. Or it may not. As always, Apple is saying nothing. — *M.JC.P.*

By Dan Warne.

Off the net

Latest shareware and free downloads



Hot Links

www.ausmac.net

Put a Leopard in your tank

Turn your Tiger into Leopard

STEVE JOBS says there are a few cool features he hasn't yet shown in the upcoming release of Mac OS X 10.5, Leopard. We certainly hope so, because many of the new features being touted are already available as cheap or free apps.

Chax 1.4.5 Donationware X (10.4.3) Universal

Why wait for iChat 4 to get tabbed chats? With Chax you can add tabs to iChat 3 (along with other nice features like auto-shrinking the iChat buddy list to fit the number of online users)

ShowMacster 1.8.1 \$US27.98 Shareware X (10.4) Universal

Delivers iChat 4's screen-sharing capability in your existing version of iChat. Even better, though, it allows you to share videos and even photo slideshows with the person you're chatting to — now there's a feature that should be included in Leopard.

ChatFX 1.2.1 \$US20 Shareware X (10.4) Universal

Whether it's really worth paying \$US20 for is arguable, but this nifty utility allows you to apply Photobooth effects and blue-screened backgrounds to your iChat 3 video chats — long before Leopard hits.

Dashclipping 1.0 Freeware X (10.4) Universal

No need to wait for Leopard's WebClip to be able to put any web page on your Dashboard: this does it for you. Paste the URL of any

web page (next bus to depart at your bus stop, movie times, TV guide, etc) and have it permanently framed on the Dash.

VirtueDesktops 0.53.r220 Freeware X (10.4) Universal

You could wait for "Spaces" in Leopard, or you could install VirtueDesktops and get multiple virtual desktops with OS X's slick transition effects when switching between them. Amazingly, if you have a PowerBook or MacBook Pro with ambient light sensing, you can simply wave your hand to change desktops.

iBackup 5.1.3 Donationware X (10.3.9) Universal

OK, it's not quite "Time Machine", but it is a super-easy backup program which can do scheduled backups including your program settings. And it's free.

HoudahSpot 1.2.5 \$14.95 Shareware X (10.4.5) Universal

Want Leopard's improved Spotlight search with more control over searches? This little app uses the familiar cascading form style to refine searches, but still uses Apple's Spotlight search engine in 10.4.

Searchlight 1.1 \$US29.90 Shareware X (10.4.4) Universal

Search other computers on your network using Spotlight — just like Leopard will be able to.

Butler 4.1.2 Donationware X (10.2.8) Universal

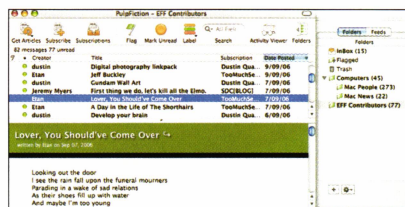
Sure, you could get fast application launching via the keyboard in Leopard's new Spotlight, or you could download Butler, and get the capability right now. Plus you can launch bookmarks with it, control iTunes and more. (You can even assign a system-wide hotkey to launching a single app, like Safari or Mail.)

Mailtags 2.0b2 \$US25 Shareware X (10.4) Universal

There are countless add-ons for Apple Mail that add all kinds of functionality (check www.hawkwings.net if you don't believe me), but the one that most closely resembles the upcoming features in Apple Mail 3.0 is Mailtags. It gives you notes and to-dos, as well as the ability to add tags to e-mail.

Pulp Fiction 1.2.2 \$US25 Shareware X (10.3) PowerPC

It's the next best thing to Apple Mail 3.0's inbuilt RSS reader: an



RSS reader that looks and feels just like Mail. It's speedy to work with and there are a few different ways of being alerted to new stories arriving.

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Pre-battle analysis

WE'RE going to begin where we left off last month. Initially, the loss of the AppleCentre brand is expected to have minimal effect and consumers surely will hardly notice the difference, but any reseller who simply runs in place for the next few years may fall well behind his or her rivals.

Australian resellers are going to have to boost their support offerings. They're going to have to work exceptionally hard to please you, the customers, to make it worthwhile for you to come to them instead of going direct to Apple or eBay for everything.

Australian resellers are also going to have to get out there and start building brand in their own right, instead of relying on the AppleCentre name to do the hard (and expensive) yards. Let's look at reseller behaviour generally, and assess the likelihood of this strategy becoming a serious option for more than a few unusually vocal and proactive resellers.

Resellers tend not to have a high presence in the community. They tend to behave more like your local medical centre, corner shop or service station than as businesses that need to grab mind-share to survive.

They might complain a lot — and with some justification — about the disloyalty and scarcity of customers, but I'm going to stick my neck out a bit far again to say that, really, they do jack-all about it.

They — with the exception of the servos — tend to be aggressively unglamorous. The average reseller — especially the street-level retailer — shuns advertising campaigns of all kinds, simply sitting back and waiting for customers to come to him or her.

In seedier or more outlying suburbs, the local medical centre, corner shop and computer reseller often all boast peeling paint, inadequate signage and poor use of street frontage. Yet they often face on to a main road with commuters rushing past twice a day, and have free parking nearby. Does this or does this not look like an opportunity missed?

Your local pizzeria, carpet cleaner, Thai eatery or pest-control specialist attacks the average local letterbox with mailouts once a week or so. Your local computer reseller generally does not. You could argue that additional customers obtained therein won't cover the cost of producing the mailouts. It is doubtful if anybody has ever done the figures to find out.

And what about internet advertising? Savvy businesses everywhere have been studying how best to harness the world of online media for



Hot Links

www.edinburghacademy.org.uk/curriculum/business/courseworkeg.htm

Discussion of the importance of advertising for one Scottish business, Otterburn Mills

store.apple.com.au/buy/applecentre/

Apple Computer link promoting AppleCentres to Apple customers

the past five years or more, but certain categories of business do little to promote themselves, apparently relying on passing foot-traffic or desperate late-night trawls of the Yellow Pages to survive.

What about marketing partnerships with other local businesses? Again, these are thin on the ground where local resellers are concerned. Wouldn't it be smarter to try to leverage the names of the big brands — in this case, Apple — they retail and repair to get users to come straight to them? I'm not saying the resellers haven't tried it; what I'm saying is that they don't do enough of it.

And what about local expos and trade shows? Granted, these can be an expensive proposition for a small business, but if family-run motorcycle sales-and-service businesses from far Western Sydney can target Sydney Motorcycle Show every year, why don't independent computer resellers do more of the same?

Maybe they could team up. Just for the trade shows. They could all have their own brands, but share a stand at the local expo. At CeBIT Australia this year, there were few resellers of any description — most seem to rely on their vendors to market the products and relax a bit when it comes to marketing themselves.

Another thing: Apple resellers have to start taking the fight direct to the competition. Enough hints about MacBooks being better than PCs in some ways; let's see it laid out for all to see, and a lot more often.

Too often, the workplace perception is that Apple computers are rather specialised and expensive, and a PC can do the workaday stuff more cheaply and efficiently.

Apple users invariably say they'll stick with their MacBooks, thanks, over any PC because they're less labour-intensive to maintain, are targeted by fewer viruses, and are just generally more pleasant and easier to use. These issues could be quantified and qualified and built into a much stronger business case for Apple that resellers could take to the market.

(Maybe Apple hasn't been as good at marketing as we like to think, especially when it comes to the computers).

A down-side of all this for you, the consumer, is that Apple resellers are going to have to recoup the costs of shouldering this burden. The obvious way is to pass the additional marketing and advertising costs direct to the end-user in higher prices. Which brings us back — surprise, surprise — to pre- and post-sales support as the only true life line for Apple resellers. ☹

Fleur Doidge is a longtime observer of the Mac reseller channel in Australia.



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Hot Links

www.coconut-flavour.com

coconutBattery

www.laprap.com.au

Laptop risers designed and built here

www.youtube.com/watch?v=qK4AonfnFaM

Video of MacSaber in action

support.apple.com/ibook_powerbook/batteryexchange

Do you need to send your battery back to Apple?

support.apple.com/macbookpro15/batteryexchange

Faulty (but not unsafe) MacBook Pro batteries

docs.info.apple.com/article.html?artnum=304058

MacBook not whiter-than-white?

www.apple.com/support/downloads/macbooksmcfirmwareupdate.html

Get rid of your MacBook's inner cow

docs.info.apple.com/article.html?artnum=304308

Random shutdown problem

www.apple.com/support/downloads/expresscardupdate10.html

ExpressCard: don't go to sleep without it



STRETCHING YOUR MOBILE MAC

Scientific tips to get more out of your 'Book

REMEMBER slogging through science class, knowing full well that most of what the teacher was saying would never apply to you in the real world? (All right, I'm sure half of you were probably glued to every word or reading ahead in the textbook; just as in those days, please bear with me while the rest of the class catches up.) Well, the real world is probably toasting your thighs right now.

Today's portable Macs offer much better performance using roughly the same svelte case designs of yesterday's slower machines. However, you can't escape the laws of thermodynamics: faster processors require more power to operate, and in turn they expel more energy in the form of heat. That results in running your laptop's battery down faster than you'd like while dealing with much hotter operating temperatures than previous Apple portables.

You're stuck obeying the laws, but don't turn your back on science: you can do several things to tilt the thermodynamic balance a little more in your favor.

Battery = (Energy-Options) + Smarts. The First Law of Laptop Thermodynamics states that your computer's battery will run out before the end of the movie you're watching. Although Apple claims, for example, that the 15-inch MacBook Pro can get 4.5 hours of use per battery charge, real-world consumption depends greatly on how you use the notebook when it's not plugged into a power outlet.

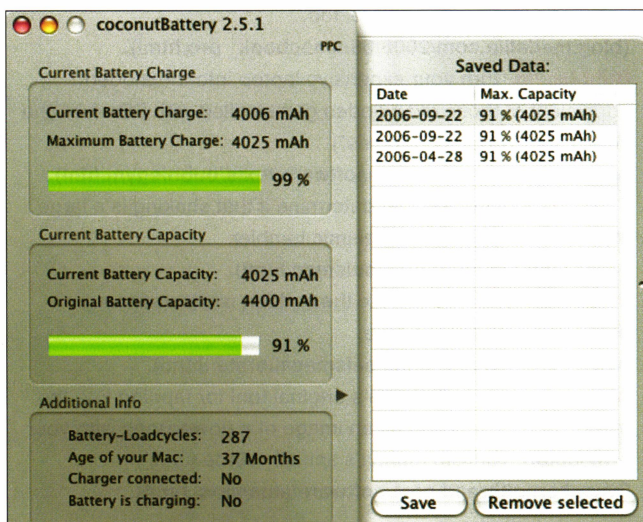
To extend that life, open the Energy Saver preference pane, choose Battery from the Settings For popup menu, and then change the Optimization setting to Better Battery Life. This general preference toggles several options, such as putting the display to sleep after the computer is inactive for just one minute and setting the Processor Performance to Reduced. You may notice a minor slowdown in everyday tasks, but likely won't be impacted much. If you've opted to show the battery status in the menu bar, you can set the processor speed from its menu for the current power connection (power adapter or battery).

While you're poking around Energy Saver, enable the option to put the hard disk to sleep when possible, since the constantly-spinning disc platter burns power, too.

Another drain on your battery is that brilliant widescreen display. Use the F1 key to lower the brightness level of the screen, or open the Displays preference pane and adjust the Brightness slider. Also consider disabling the option there to automatically adjust the brightness based on ambient light.

To squeak a little more power out of your system, turn off AirPort or Bluetooth (or both), which regularly broadcast signals even if a wireless network or device isn't in the vicinity. Many MacBook Pro and PowerBook G4 owners can also turn off keyboard illumination in the Keyboard & Mouse preference pane, or using the F8, F9, and F10 keys on the built-in keyboard.

Coconut bounty. coconutBattery not only tells you how much charge is in your battery, but also how often it's been discharged and the original capacity.



MacBook errata

The MacBook and MacBook Pro have got raves from reviewers and owners, but like any mass-produced piece of highly-specialised electronics, some significant problems have cropped up.

Flammable battery recall (PowerBook G4 and iBook G4).

Millions of lithium-ion batteries manufactured by Sony have been recalled due to the danger of overheating and possibly combustion (as we went to press, Toshiba and Fujitsu announced they were also recalling Sony-built batteries, joining Apple's and Dell's recalls). Check out the Battery Exchange Program iBook G4 and PowerBook G4 page for affected battery serial numbers and instructions to get a replacement battery (see — no pun intended — “Hot links”).

Defective batteries (MacBook Pro). Unlike Apple's other battery recall, this problem doesn't pose a safety risk. Some batteries do not perform well and are being replaced (see “Hot links” but note that the instructions on that page apply to US customers. If your battery is within the recall range, contact your local AppleCentre).

Yellowing palmrest area (white MacBook). A discoloration on some white MacBooks is caused by a manufacturing defect, according to Apple. Contact AppleCare to get the case replaced (see “Hot links”).

“Mooing” noise (MacBook). The MacBook's fan would cycle up and down and cause a faint bovine-like “moo” sound. Udderly fixed by MacBook SMC firmware update (see “Hot links”).

Random Shutdown Syndrome (MacBook). This problem appears to be a logic board issue, which Apple is aware of, although reports online indicate that swapping out the logic board doesn't always solve the issue. Contact AppleCare (see “Hot links”).

ExpressCard prevents sleep (MacBook Pro). The laptop wouldn't go to sleep if a card was inserted into the ExpressCard slot. Fixed by the ExpressCard Update 1.0 (see “Hot links”).



These simple steps will help you get more time out of each battery charge, but don't forget about the battery's longevity. Condition the battery at least once a month by running the laptop until the machine puts itself to sleep, and then plug in the power adapter and recharge the battery to its fullest. This advice is especially aimed at people who work most of the time using the power plug.

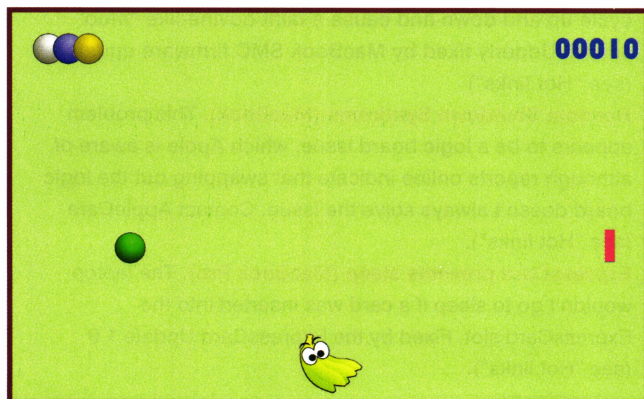
Unfortunately, batteries lose their capacity over time. Use a utility such as Christoph Sinai's coconutBattery (see "Hot links") to check the battery's capacity and chart the values over time (see the screenshot "Coconut bounty").

Heat=(Notebook+Lap)*Processor. The Second Law of Laptop Thermodynamics is that your fingers will never again go numb from cold while you're working, because today's portables get almost too hot to the touch (which is why Apple no longer refers to them as "laptops"). MacBooks and MacBook Pros, especially, seem to heat up when the processor is active and when charging the battery. Before you reach for asbestos gloves, however, try these suggestions.

Reducing the processor speed in the Energy Saver preference pane will help with temperature as well as battery life because the processor won't be working as hard. Also try not to run applications that are particularly processor-intensive (including the Classic environment, which never seemed to have gotten the memo that it didn't need to fire on all cylinders, all the time). The laptop's fans will kick in to cool things off — draining more battery power.

To avoid charring your legs, look into purchasing a laptop stand or riser such as the Australian-made LapRamp or LapTube (see "Hot links"), which lift the computer and allow airflow underneath. A wooden board or notebook (the paper kind) works well when you just need a surface while sitting on the couch or in bed, too.

Bouncy bubbles. Use the Sudden Motion Sensor found in modern Mac portables to roll bubbles and pick up fruit by tilting your entire laptop.



Laptop+Science=Geek Bliss. You don't have to be a scientist to take advantage of the technology in your Mac portable. All it takes is a bit of basic knowledge and the right controls at hand. If you do happen to be a scientist and know that these aren't the real rules of thermodynamics, don't get too steamed: I was an English major. ☹️

The Woz Exception

Science, as you know, is serious business. And yet, when you peek into the corners of any scientific endeavor, you'll find what I call the Woz Exception, which states that any sufficiently useful technology can be put to silly ends.

The MacBook and MacBook Pro include what Apple calls a Sudden Motion Sensor, which is capable of detecting abrupt movement — such as the sudden downward acceleration that occurs when a laptop is dropped — and then parking the read/write heads on the hard drive to help prevent disk damage. It didn't take long for the Woz Exception to appear, as several developers have written utilities that tap into the Sudden Motion Sensor's data. Here are a few; some are even useful.

MacSaber. Undoubtedly the first thing that came to mind was swinging your MacBook around like a Jedi knight. MacSaber provides all the sound effects of a lightsaber duel based on motion and velocity. (see "Hot links" for a clip of MacSaber in action). (www.isnoop.net).

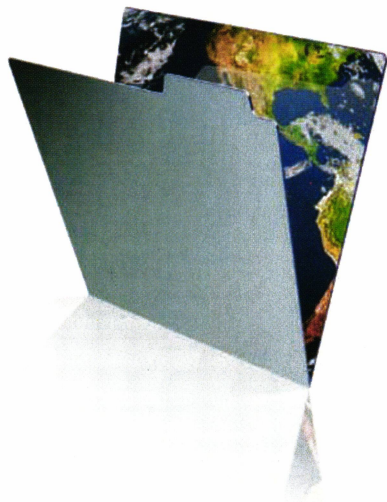
SmackBook Pro. Before you cry "laptop abuse!" take a look at this clever hack that switches between active desktops simply by tapping the side of the computer. Plenty of other variations can be found here, too. (blog.medallia.com/2006/05/smacbook_pro.html).

Bubblegym. Turn your expensive laptop into the modern equivalent of those old wooden games filled with BBs (see the screenshot "Bouncy bubbles"). (www.balooba.se/baloobasoftware/texts/bubblegym.htm).

SeisMac. Finally, you can determine if that shaking is a large truck outside or a full-on seismic tumbler. (www.suitable.com/tools/seismac.html).

SeisMaCalibrate. Calibrate the sudden motion sensor in preparation for the Big One. (www.suitable.com/tools/seismacalibrate.html).

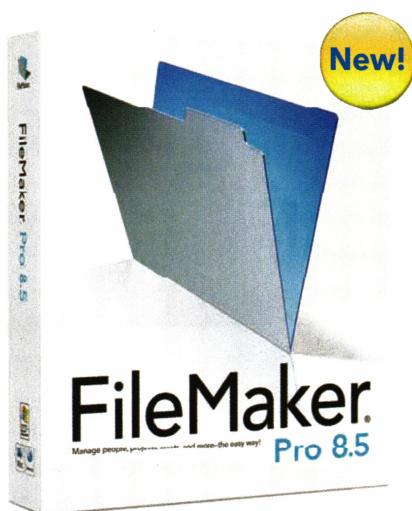
AMSVisualizer. Amit Singh's original tool for tapping into the motion sensor lets you tilt an image of a PowerBook with your own laptop. Thrills! (Yeah, it's actually kinda fun.) (www.kernelthread.com/software/ams/ams.html).



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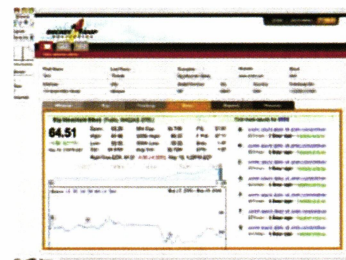
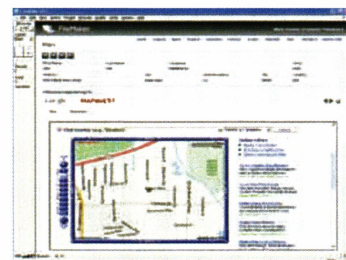
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Hobart 03 6238 1000



By Dr Franklin N Tessler

GUIDE TO HEALTHY COMPUTING

Simple strategies for staying pain free on the job

David Pogue's soreness came on gradually, and was often most pronounced after long sessions at his Mac. It started with some aching in his wrists. After a while, the pain he felt after typing became so severe that he couldn't button his shirt without help. When the *New York Times* columnist and Broadway pianist was diagnosed with tendinitis, a type of repetitive strain injury (RSI) in which the tendons become inflamed, he turned to speech-recognition software — a solution that he says helped save his career.

It's hard to say for sure what role computers play in injuries such as these — even experts disagree on the subject. The issue becomes trickier when you consider that some RSI-like symptoms aren't caused by computers, and certain complaints, like eyestrain and headaches, don't qualify as RSI. (For more on the different types of computer-related injuries, see the sidebar "The lowdown on RSIs and CRDs".) Still, the relationship between computers and pain, numbness, and other debilitating symptoms is too persuasive to discount.

Whether you use your computer for work or entertainment, you're at risk for developing RSI. You don't have to give up your Mac to stay fit, however.

Australian Macworld November 06



Hot Links

share.studio.adobe.com
Adobe Studio Exchange

www.macworld.com/2005/11/features/automatorhome/index.php
Tutorial on using Automator to reduce repetition

www.macworld.com/2004/09/secrets/septworkingmac/index.php/
Find applications' hidden shortcuts

www.typeit4me.com
TypeIt4Me

www.smileonmymac.com/textexpander/index.html
TextExpander

www.publicspace.net/MacBreakZ
MacBreakZ

www.balancedergonomics.com
WorkPlace software as well as ergonomic furniture and computer accessories

tech.inhelsinki.nl/antirsi/
AntiRSI

www.tifaq.com
Typing Injury FAQ

ehs-alert.fms.bap.cmu.edu/Occupational_Safety/ergonomics.htm
www.ergonomics.ucla.edu
US universities' RSI help pages

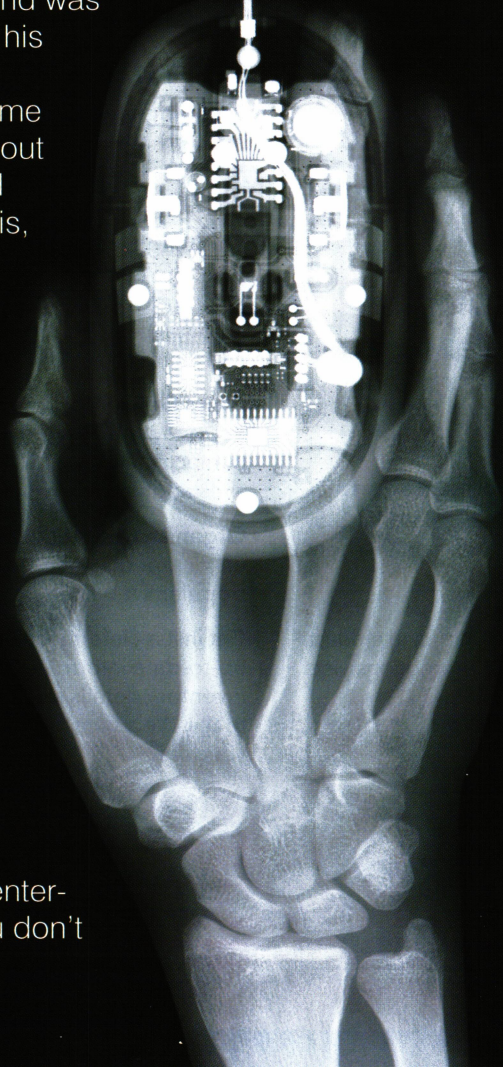
www.rsi.org.au
RSI and Overuse Injury Association of the ACT

www.microsoft.com/hardware
Maker of ergonomic keyboards and mice

www.kinesis-ergo.com
Another maker of ergonomic stuff

www.datahand.com
An ergonomic keyboard, sort of

www.novitatech.org.au
www.spectronicsinoz.com
www.abilitycorp.com.au
Assistive technologies suppliers



REARRANGE YOUR WORKSPACE

One easy way to lessen your risk of injury is to get the right chair (or adjust the one you have) and set up your hardware correctly. While most ergonomists concur that certain arrangements are particularly hazardous, they don't always agree on what's best. That makes it difficult to suggest a perfect setup, so consider these recommendations as guidelines.

Customise your chair. Your chair determines the posture of your back, arms, and legs, so finding one that fits your body size is essential. Office chairs run the gamut – from economical models with a few adjustable features to thousand-dollar seats that sport more levers and buttons than a 747's cockpit. Here are some things to pay attention to, whether you're buying a chair or customising your current seat:

A. Back support. The seat's back should be tall enough to support at least your lower and middle back, especially in the lumbar area (the lower part that curves inward). Also, make sure it tilts forward and backward. Adjust the back so that the angle between your trunk and legs is a bit more than 90 degrees.

B. Good armrests. Choose a chair with padded armrests. You should be able to rest your arms comfortably, without having to extend them too far or tuck them tightly against your body. Many chairs sport armrests that you can raise or lower so that you don't end up shrugging or stooping your shoulders. If you can't find a comfortable armrest position, remove them altogether or find another chair.

C. Solid cushioning. The chair should have a padded cushion that's long enough from front to back to support your buttocks

Environment counts

Mundane tasks such as answering the phone, jotting notes, and reading documents can take their toll if you're not careful. So pay attention to the following:

Phone positioning. When you're on the phone, make sure you don't twist your body or cradle the handset between your head and shoulder. If you need to have both hands free while chatting, buy a headset and microphone.

Lighting. Make sure that your environment is bright enough so you can see without straining, but not so intense that it overwhelms your computer display. Direct lighting is great for illuminating your keyboard and paperwork, but avoid lights that shine directly into your eyes or cause screen glare.

Temperature. Most people are comfortable at about 20 degrees Celsius, but tastes vary. Try to avoid working directly under an air conditioning vent or other source of blowing air.

and thighs without touching the back of your knees. Look for a cushion that's smoothly rounded in front to avoid putting pressure on the backs of your thighs.

D. Height adjustment. Adjust the chair so that your forearms and wrists are about desktop height when your elbows are at 90 degrees. Your feet should be flat on the floor – if they dangle, use a footrest.

E. Rollability. Chairs that are wobbly or don't roll smoothly force you to bend or twist to reach your equipment. Look for a chair with five legs, and make sure that it rolls easily. If you work in a carpeted area, get a floor pad that won't buckle as you move.

Adjust input devices. RSI problems are often compounded by poor hardware design, which forces you to use awkward positions and excessive force while typing or using your mouse. Fortunately, your setup can help minimise the risk of injury.

F. Trays and wrist rests. Adjustable keyboard trays help on several levels. They keep your keyboard in a flat or slightly backward-tilted position, which is safer. They also help you tweak the height of your input devices so you don't have to angle your wrists to reach them. Tray or no tray, try to avoid propping up your keyboard on its retractable feet. Although that makes it easier to see the keys, it also forces you to bend your wrists.

Also, beware of wrist rests: they help keep your wrists straight, but they put pressure on the nerves and tendons at the back of your wrist. Look for a wrist rest that's smoothly contoured and padded, and only use it during rest periods, not when you're typing.

G. Typing technique. Pounding on keys increases the impact on your fingers. Instead, try to keep your hands in a relaxed, natural position as you type, with your fingers arched smoothly, floating over the keys. If your keyboard requires that you press the keys extra hard to elicit a response, try a different one.

H. Mouse position. Situate the mouse as close to the keyboard as possible, so you don't have to extend your arm and shoulder as you move between the two. If you use a keyboard tray, it should be large enough to accommodate both a keyboard and a mouse.



The lowdown on RSIs and CRDs

Here are some of the terms commonly referenced in discussions about computer-related stress injuries.

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome. A condition that's caused by pressure on a nerve in the wrist.

CRD (Computer-Related Disorder). Any type of computer-induced illness.

RSI (Repetitive Strain Injury, or Repetition Strain Injury). the most common type of CRD, it occurs when small repetitive motions (typing, mousing, and so on) injure tendons and other body parts.

Tendons. Bands of tissue that connect bones to muscles.

Ulnar Deviation. stressful outward angling of the hands caused by conventional keyboards.

Move your monitor. The position of your LCD or CRT is crucial, as poorly-placed monitors tend to put extra strain on your eyes and upper spine. Here's what to consider:

I. Height and angle. Conventional wisdom says that the top of the monitor should be slightly below eye level, so you don't have to glance up or crane your neck. Some experts recommend an even lower position, so you're actually looking down at the monitor. As for tilt, make sure the monitor is angled backward slightly so that the top of the screen is farther from your eyes.

Distance. It's less stressful for your eyes to focus on a distant visual target, so try to place your monitor 45 to 60cm away, farther if there's room. (If necessary, enlarge the on-screen text size to compensate.) If you wear glasses and spend more than a couple of hours a day at your Mac, consider getting lenses with a midrange focal zone that's tailored for computer users.

Body positioning. Your body, monitor, and keyboard should form a straight line – you shouldn't have to rotate your trunk or neck to type or to read your screen.

REDUCE REPETITIVE MOTION

A proper workspace setup is important, but it can only help so much. To further lessen your risk of RSI, try cutting back on the amount of typing and mousing you do. Mac OS X, along with many popular applications, features built-in tools that can abbreviate tasks. Or you can invest in some third-party add-ons to help you. Remember: A shortcut should not be more harmful than the action it replaces. For example, stretching your fingers to press three keys at the same time may put more stress on your fingers and tendons than using the mouse.

Automate common tasks. Replacing repetitive multi-step procedures with automated sequences can be a huge benefit, and many applications come with such features built in. For instance, Adobe Photoshop's actions let you trigger certain tasks, such as resizing, rotating, and saving an image, with a single mouse click. Photoshop comes with several actions (File: Automate: Batch), and hundreds more are available for free from Adobe's Studio Exchange (see "Hot links").

Don't use Photoshop? Automator, a utility that ships with Mac OS X 10.4, lets you program complex operations called workflows by dragging actions into a flowchart-like window. For instance, you can create workflows to mail selected items in the Finder or resize a group of images. To find out more about how to set up workflows, read Macworld's tutorial "Make Automator work for you" (see "Hot links").

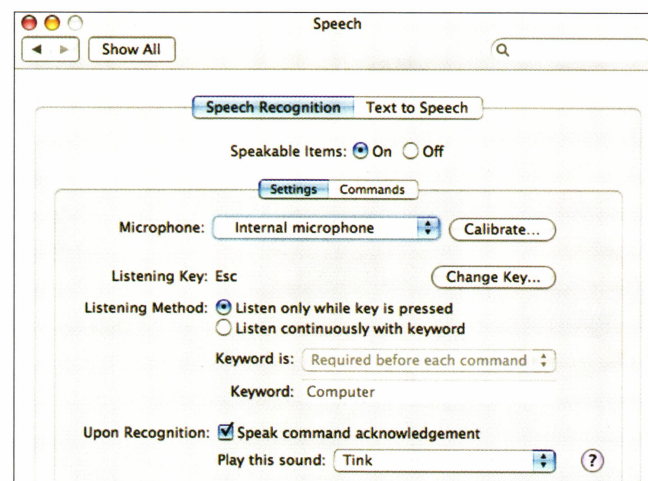
While Automator's workflows are limited to stringing together predefined steps (such as retrieving the contents of a folder), Startly Technologies' QuicKeys X3 (\$180 from DVDirect, 02 9452 6001)

offers more flexibility: it can automate just about any action, including typing, mouse clicks, and system operations. To use QuicKeys, you have to break up the job into a series of distinct steps (click on a button, wait until a window disappears, and so on), but the effort pays off if you tend to repeat the same sequences often.

Try shortcuts. One simple way to reduce typing is to use built-in shortcuts for common commands. To find the shortcuts available for an application, use the Help menu and do a search for shortcuts. Many applications, including Microsoft Word, also let you customise your own keyboard shortcuts. And if you're using Mac OS X 10.3 or later, you can set keyboard shortcuts for any menu command in most applications (see "Hot links").

You can also reduce typing by using text expanders, which let you enter blocks of text with a few keystrokes. This capability is built into Microsoft Word via the AutoText feature. For instance,

Watch your speech. In the Speech preference pane, you can instruct your Mac to listen for commands continuously or only when you press a modifier key.



REPLACE YOUR EQUIPMENT

Increased awareness of RSI over the past couple of decades has spawned a flood of so-called ergonomic devices that claim to reduce the risk of injury. Unfortunately, determining whether a product lives up to its claims is difficult without actually using it. Like gloves, keyboards and pointing devices are personal — one size doesn't fit all. Before buying any device, make sure that you can return it after a trial period.

Switch your keyboard. To reach the keys on a conventional keyboard, you have to angle your hands outward and bend your wrists. This position puts stress on nerves, muscles, and tendons. Ergonomic keyboards are designed to diminish these problems.

The simplest models, like Microsoft's Wireless Laser Desktop, turn the right and left sides of the keyboard outward so that your arms, wrists, and hands form a straight line as you type. Note, though, that since there's no ideal angle for everyone, this keyboard may not work for you.

To help accommodate different body types, some ergonomic keyboards are split down the middle, allowing you to adjust the angle between the two halves. The Kinesis Maxim (available online — see "Hot links") goes one step further: not only can you adjust the angle between the two halves, but you can also tilt the centre point of the keyboard upward like a tent so that your wrists and hands assume a more relaxed, vertical position.

If an angled or split keyboard doesn't do the trick, the \$US497 DataHand Personal Edition (available online — see "Hot links") lets you type without moving your hands. Each palm rests on a contoured pad while fingertips fit into receptacles equipped with small switches that you press to enter characters. To type the letter H, move your right index finger slightly to the left; enter an A by pressing down with your left pinkie. Remember: The more unconventional the keyboard, the greater your typing speed will suffer, at least initially.

Upgrade your mouse. As with keyboards, you must consider both the type and feel (or grip) of a mouse before you buy it. Clenching



a mouse too tightly can strain your muscles, especially if the device is too small for your hand. Luckily, mice now come in a wide range of sizes, so you should be able to find one that fits your hand comfortably. Make sure that the mouse buttons don't require too much or too little force, and that they provide a comfortable resting place for your fingers while you work.

If conventional mice aren't doing the trick, there are several unique ones available. Evoluent's VerticalMouse 2 (distributed by F1 Computing, 0414 472 083) lets you hold your hand in a vertical position (think handshake), which is less stressful because it keeps your forearm from twisting. It comes in two versions: one for right-handed users (\$109) and one for left-handers (\$145).

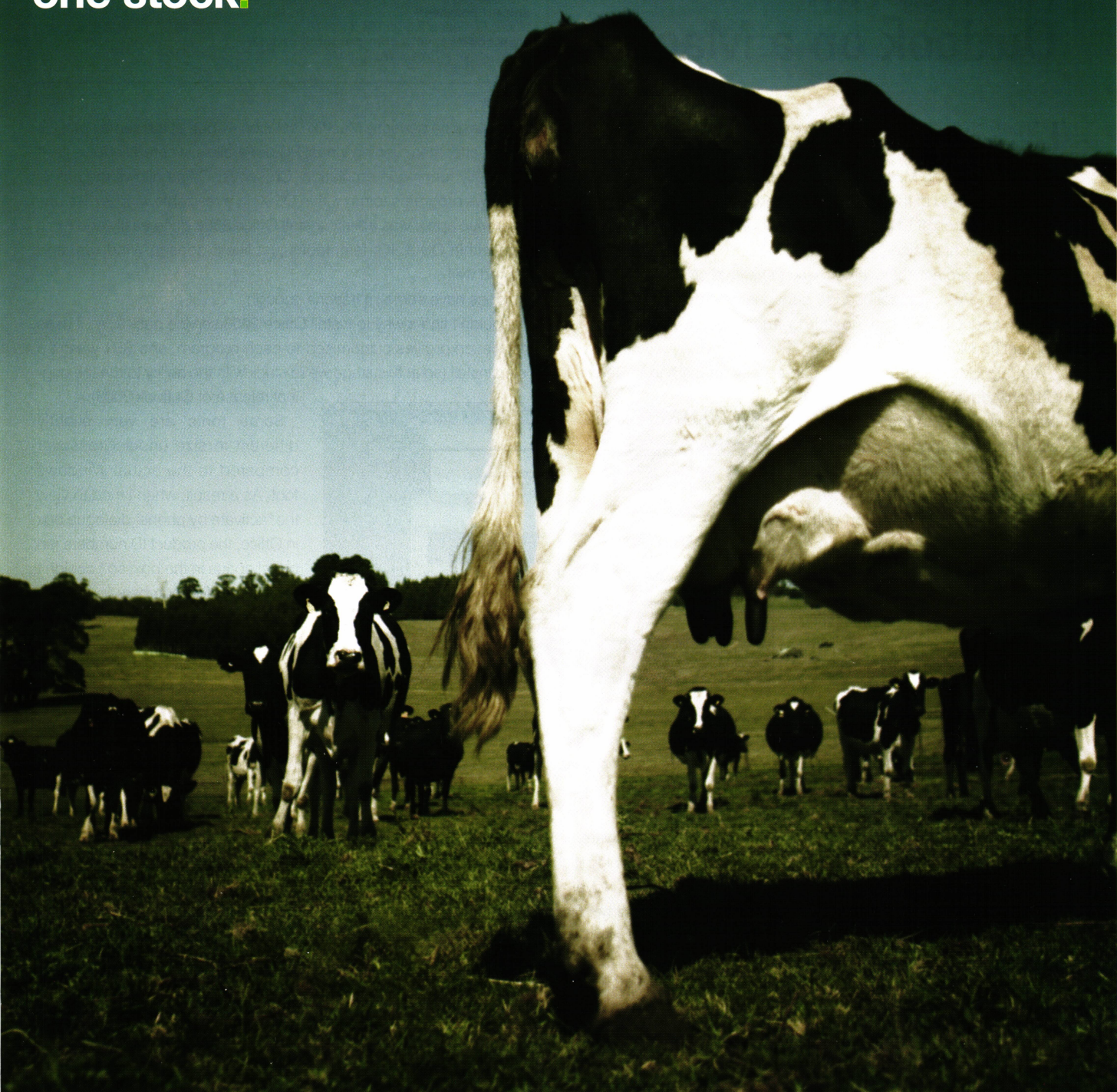
If you have arm or shoulder symptoms, trackballs are a good choice since they demand less motion than mice. Models like Kensington's Expert Mouse (\$99 from Try and Byte, 02 9906 5227) feature a trackball at the top. Others, like Logitech's TrackMan Wheel (\$60 wired or \$90 wireless from Logitech Australia, 02 9972 3711), have a side-mounted ball that you roll with your thumb, so your hand hardly has to move. One nice bonus is that many trackballs (and mice) have programmable buttons. Customise them to perform common functions such as control-clicking, launching your browser, or even activating Automator workflows or QuickKeys sequences.

Try assistive technology. Special input devices designed for users with physical impairments are another alternative for RSI sufferers. If you find it difficult to click or type, you can perform clicks and key presses with your feet through P.I. Engineering's X-keys Foot Pedal (\$289 from Microgram Computers, 02 4389 8444). Origin Instruments' HeadMouse Extreme (\$1934 from Novitatch Regency Park, 1300 855 585) allows you to control the cursor by moving your head. Many other assistive solutions are available in Australia (see "Hot links" for some suppliers).

The bottom line. Even if you think that the problem of computer-induced injuries is overblown, it makes sense to minimise your risk. Simple things, such as tweaking your workspace or investing in a more-comfortable input device, can go a long way. With your health and livelihood at stake, that's good preventive medicine. 🐭



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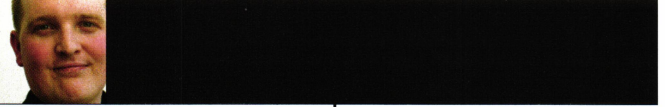
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How to run Outlook on a Mac

IN previous editions of *AMW*, I've lamented the lack of an OS X version of Microsoft Outlook, one of the remaining fundamental barriers to using Mac OS X in most corporate office environments. There, in the land of the grey cubicle, the TPS Report and the upward manager, Microsoft Exchange reigns supreme as the IT department e-mail server of choice.

In fact, to protect its coveted market share, Microsoft encrypts the Extended MAPI protocol used to communicate between Exchange Server and Outlook, so no third-party developer can make a competing client.

Although Microsoft Entourage can access an Exchange Server, it can only do so if the IT department makes changes to the server, and even then, its support is patchy.

Last month, I mentioned that a Novell engineer based in Bangalore, India, has released a version of the Linux e-mail client Evolution that works on OS X, which offered new hope for a native Mac client. Evolution is widely touted as an alternative to Outlook as it has probably the most advanced Exchange Server compatibility of any e-mail client.

I've now been able to get it working (with some difficulty). Unfortunately there are some real hurdles to using it: files are installed with incorrect permissions, preventing them from running; it's necessary to set a visual GUI theme for the Gnome windowing environment manually, and Evolution can only be launched from the X11 command line. As a result, I can't recommend it as a fully-baked piece of software.

I had a pleasant e-mail chat with the developer, who was apologetic about the omissions, explaining that it is not an officially Novell-supported release, so he can only work on it in his spare time. He plans to remedy the problems with a subsequent release, based on the Evolution 2.8.3 codebase.

However, it also unfortunately turns out that Evolution can't directly access an Exchange Server. It must still go via Outlook Web Access, which is the webmail facility on Exchange — something that Exchange Server administrators are often loath to enable for security reasons.

So the bad news is that Outlook remains the only program that can communicate natively with an Exchange server using Microsoft's encrypted Extended MAPI protocol.

The good news is that in the last month, there's been a major development — for Intel Mac owners at least.

Codeweavers' Crossover Office for Mac is a port of the Linux WINE project, which allows a selection of Windows applications to run directly in OS X for Intel Macs, including ... drumroll ... Outlook 2000 and 2003.



Hot Links

snipurl.com/wpfi

Novell Evolution 2.6 for OS X

www.codeweavers.com/products/cxmac/

Codeweavers Crossover for Mac

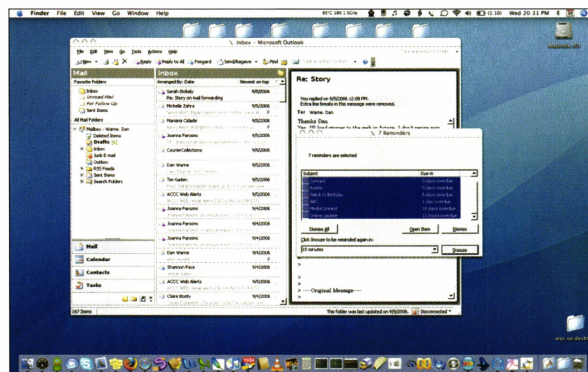
Sure, it's not a perfectly Mac-like solution — but, at the same time, it's much better than running Virtual PC or Parallels, where Windows itself is actually running in emulation. Crossover Office allows the actual Windows programs to run within OS X, in a resizable window like any other Mac app. I was able to install Office 2003 quite easily and run it from within OS X. It's fast, looks just like it does in Windows, and worked well.

It does have some limitations, though.

I couldn't find a way to install Office 2003 service pack 1, as it uses installation profiles customised to each program, and SP1 wasn't a listed install (so at this stage we're stuck with the ability to run the original release of Outlook 2003).

Some fonts are very slightly different in size under Crossover compared to the actual Windows font. As a result, when I tried to view the "activate by phone" dialogue box in Office, the product ID numbers ran out of space in the box, so I couldn't see the last few numbers.

When you click an e-mail link in a program on OS X, Crossover isn't able to pick up the click and transfer it to Outlook — instead, it opens a



new e-mail in your default Mac mail client.

I was only able to install Outlook from a retail boxed copy supplied by Microsoft for testing. I couldn't install from the 60-day demo of Office, nor a backup volume-licence installation disc (though it wasn't the original copy of the volume licence disk, and Office does have some copy protection, which may account for the error.)

What is really impressive about Crossover Office, though, is that you can put an Outlook icon in your Dock like any other Mac app. However, it can only be used to launch the program; it doesn't show a black triangle underneath when running, nor does it allow you to switch back to Outlook by clicking the icon: it actually launches a second copy — yikes!

Additionally, you can resize the Outlook window just like an application running in Windows (a big advantage over virtualised environments like Parallels where you actually have to change the screen resolution).

So, for now, Crossover Office is the best solution I've found for accessing Exchange e-mail on a Mac. At the time of writing, it was available as a free downloadable beta-test version, with a pre-order price of \$US39.95. When it is released, it will sell for \$US59.95, with volume-licence discounts available. No word on Australian distribution yet.

Dan Warne is passionate about the state of broadband in Australia.

Richard Luxton,

From traditional photo compositor to now one of Australia's most experience digital retouchers.

Thirteen years further on Richard is now enjoying the ability to work from his home in Sydney with his own powerful digital image retouching system based on an Apple workstation, a Wacom Intuos3 pen/tablet and a LaCie 319 LCD monitor with pure and reliable enough colour for soft proofing on screen.

"It is essential to use a high quality monitor when retouching, as colour matching is always a critical issue. I was worried about switching to flat screen LCD monitors until recently as the flat screens all seemed to be too bright and punchy and not really a true representation of the tonal qualities of the originals.

However, LaCie's LCD monitors

can be calibrated with the handy Blue Eye Pro, a hardware calibration and ICC profiling system to give a very accurate representation of the original files."

Richard recently made the switch to a LaCie 319 LCD Monitor seamlessly.

"Wacom pressure sensitive tablets are all I have known in the thirteen years since I have been digital and they have always delivered what I have needed to work creatively. A mouse would be totally inappropriate for the type of work I do. I need a pencil or an airbrush or a paint brush, and that's what I get from my Wacom Intuos3 9"x12" pressure sensitive pen/tablet."

Feature Interview brought to you by Wacom.



Richard Luxton: r2n2@primus.com.au - Wazok Pty Ltd

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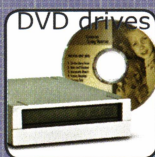
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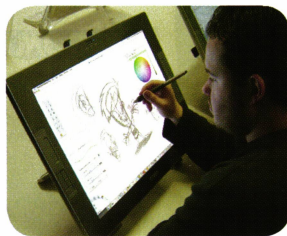
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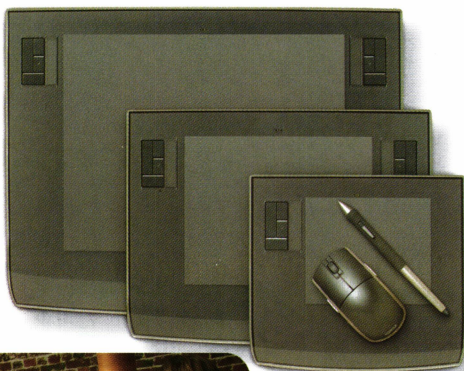
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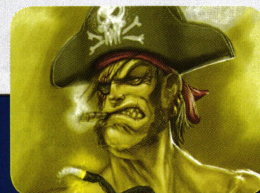


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A large collection of tips on table-top shooting



Flashy tricks. A simple but quite effective way to soften lighting is Panasonic's DMC-L1 DSLR camera with an inbuilt pentaprism that bounces the light onto the subject.

Creating your own photo studio

THERE'S a world of difference between a professional photographer and an amateur and, with the current status of digital photography, it's not entirely based on equipment — the best gear is not necessarily owned by the best photographer. High quality photography is a knowledge-based accomplishment: the more you know about the game, the better you can play it.

Owning a digital SLR is not a bank-breaker any more. For far less than \$2000 you can wrap your fingers around a decent camera, bundled with a couple of lenses, from a major manufacturer. Cameras at this price level from names like Canon, Pentax, Nikon, Olympus, Sony and others can capture images at sufficient resolution for you to make sharp, fully colour-saturated prints larger than A4 and in some cases right up to A3. In the right hands these cameras can shoot images with the best of the pros — if you know how. Of course, more dollars will

Under the big top. The Cubelite is a mini studio, ideal for small items. Portable too.



buy you gear with more talents, but then you need the expertise to drive it.

If you're an advanced amateur or a semi-professional, picking up a few dollars here and there with the occasional wedding or a real estate shoot, your picture-making skills are probably quite developed.

However, now and then it pays to step back a bit and take a serious look at your personal skill set. Are you the full bottle on photography? Sure you've got a firm grip on setting exposure, choosing a lens, framing an image and the rest of it. No doubt you're well up on shooting people, places, sports, landscapes, flowers — your list goes on!

The common factor across all of these subjects is that they are captured in available light situations: people outdoors or inside homes, restaurants and so forth; streetscapes by day or night; landscapes in all sorts of lighting conditions. With available light you're very much slave to the prevailing conditions, not the master.

Then you face a serious challenge: you have to take a "beauty" shot of a young girl, a properly lit shot of an antique vase or a glass of wine. And the light comes on!

Hopefully, the light that comes on is not the pop-up flash cell that sits on top of your DSLR's pentaprism viewfinder, a light source that is possibly the single greatest enemy of good quality photography. After all, the worst way to illuminate a subject is to aim the light source directly at it — which is exactly where the camera's fixed flash is pointed, facing straight ahead and probably a few centimetres above the lens centre, blasting out any detail in the item before the camera's lens.

Sure, you can correct the onboard flash's red eye effect, either by using the camera's red-eye reduction mode or dabbing out the blood-red irises in Photoshop. But red eye is

not the major demon. It's the angle and quality of the light!

Home shooting. I've known plenty of accomplished amateur photographers who've grasped the nettle and seen the need for a situation where they can control the lighting of a subject that demands much more than available light to bring out its best. It's called a home studio.

A home studio can be many things and be as elaborate as your needs require or your budget dictates. It can also be as large or small as the space you can commandeer.

The camera. Let's assume you have a dSLR of decent resolution. Start at eight million pixels on the CCD. Your standard lens will probably focus down to a metre or it may have a macro mode that will get you even closer.

The tripod. We'll also assume that if you're serious enough about photography to want to set up a studio, you already have a tripod. The need for a sturdy tripod can't be emphasised strongly enough. The less you have to worry about the dynamic stability of your camera when shooting, the better you can devote all your attention to the shot, the framing, the lighting. Without a decent tripod, you're not a serious photographer.

If you don't already have one, don't be surprised if some of the highly-specced models head towards the \$1000 mark; tripod design these days is highly sophisticated, using high tech materials like carbon fibre for light weight plus strength.

Some of the top names are Manfrotto, Gitzo, Miller, Slik, Vinten and Sunpak, and all should be available from quality photographic suppliers.

The space. You won't need a lot of space for a home studio. If your partner is accommo-

The look

Appropriate lighting is arguably the key to top photography. Poor lighting can spoil the best shot. Placing your subject on a white background is attractive and compelling.

But what's white? If you operate your camera in auto exposure mode and an averaging metering mode you're likely to see a white background rendered as a muddy grey. A better approach is to use the camera's spot metering mode and aim it at the subject's face or an area that is mid-toned. The result is that the white background is captured as a "blown-out" white. This is far preferable.

You are the master of the light. If you use light creatively and with understanding you'll achieve great results. Don't be afraid to experiment — and do look with a knowing eye.

dating, you could conceivably use a corner of a spacious living room, although commonsense indicates this is not ideal. A better option is an area away from human activities: ideal is a garage or rumpus room — but you must be able to black it out or ensure that minimum extraneous light enters the area. You'll also need a ceiling height of at least three metres.

Preferably, the walls and ceiling of the home studio should be white, to allow light to be bounced from them. Using white walls and ceilings also prevents unwanted colour casts from marring your shooting efforts. Colour casts across parts of your images are virtually impossible to correct in Photoshop.

The space between your camera and the subject will vary depending on the subject. For shooting people the ideal is a minimum 1.5 metres between your subject and the background (this will help the background to drop out of sharp focus and also diminish any shadows that may fall on it). With tabletop shooting of macro shots of coins, stamps or other small items, less room is needed.

Lights. As a beginning, you can still use the camera's onboard flash but with some softening diffusion over it or, better still, find a way of bouncing it off a white ceiling to avoid that direct flash bugbear.

Panasonic's classy new L1 dSLR camera has an inbuilt pantograph that bounces the light onto the subject via the ceiling — a good way to travel — but the output of such a flash unit is very small.

At this point you face the need for extra light. My feeling is that you should stay with flash and acquire some outboard units that can be triggered from the camera's flash.

Mains powered, continuous output lights are not for the beginner and, while electronic flash units can be costly, there are economical ways to move in this direction. Mains units use incandescent (tungsten), tungsten-halogen, fluorescent or HMI light sources. Whilst a setup using this form of lighting is attractive due to its relatively low cost, you do engage with units that have (fluorescents excepted) a significant heat factor and high electric current draw.

Another downside is that, aside from fluorescent units, the output is not balanced to daylight colour temperature and as the lamps age they become more yellowish in output. Flash units are close to daylight.

Auxiliary flash units — Monoblocs — designed for use in the studio have a ring-shaped flash tube for the exposure as well as a low-powered, cooler continuous light that can be used for "modeling" your lighting, giving an accurate idea of how the final, flash-exposed shot will look. At the moment of flash exposure the modelling light switches off. Monobloc units connect to mains power.

Monoblocs will do the trick for most people, even semi-pros. The transformer, rectifier, capacitor, flash and modelling lamp are built into the flash head itself; some have a fan to cool the modelling light. More elaborate power packs rely on a separate floor unit, with the flash units connecting to this; these are more suited to major setups or rapid frequency exposure shooting.

The output of Monoblocs is quite powerful and rated in joules (or sometimes as watt/seconds); ratings from 250 to 600 joules will usually suffice for home studio use. A unit outputting 500 joules is precisely double the power of one rated at 250 joules — this lets you close down the lens by one f stop. Virtually all studio flash units can be switched to give quarter, half or full power.

Firing the flash units is achieved by a cable linking with the camera, a light-triggered

slave sensor, wireless trigger or IR sensor; all units can be synched in this manner.

Metering. In setting the camera the first task is to select the shutter speed that allows full synch with the flash exposure. The actual lens aperture is determined by the total output of the flash units in use. For this you'll need a flash meter.

A flash meter measures the flash output. Some will measure continuous light as well; flash output can be measured manually or by connecting the camera's synch cord into the meter. You can elect to take a reflected reading by pointing the meter at the subject or an 18 per cent grey card; or you can take an incident reading of the light falling on the subject, with the meter pointed at the camera, the sensitive cell covered by a translucent dome to average out the light reading.

Accessories. Raw flash illumination is pretty stark, so you'll need to investigate some accessories to massage the final effect on the subject. These accessories mould and control the light to enhance the subject and avoid heavy shadows. It's important to remember that anything you place between the flash and the subject will not only alter the quality of light but also diminish its power.

A flash umbrella is a good start, an economical way to glam up the flash's output. These are finished in silver, white and translucent coverings: silver delivers a bright,

Shadow boxing.
A softbox like this unit can provide soft, shadowless lighting.



Digital Polaroid

The buzz with digital cameras is their rapid replay of the captured shot and, with a few models, you can enjoy a live preview, as you shoot, on the rear LCD screen. This way you can assess your shooting as you go.

With the upper level dSLRs, like Canon's EOS-1Ds and Nikon's D2Xs, you can use a FireWire output to tether a laptop or desktop Mac to the camera and operate the camera from the computer, rapidly downloading your shooting to the Mac's hard drive. Canon and Nikon have proprietary software that handles this.

Another option with this level of camera is WiFi wireless operation to download the images direct to the Mac. Taking trip-inducing cables out of the equation is a big benefit!

I suggest you capture in RAW format, with an accompanying JPEG. Set up the camera and Mac to download the JPEG to allow quick previewing, while the much larger RAW file can follow.

Yet another opportunity is to use a PictBridge compatible printer and download the pictures directly for printing.

sparkly effect; white is the most diffused; a translucent covered umbrella delivers a very soft effect but with much loss of output.

Reflector panels are also useful, letting you bounce the light from the white surface. A budget approach is to buy a few sheets of polystyrene to use as studio reflectors.

The more advanced will probably find advantages in a softbox which will give you softer lighting and better contrast than flash umbrellas. A softbox is a reflector-lined cavity covered with diffusing white material.

To direct and concentrate the light a snoot can be placed over a light source to add sparkle to hair.

Table top. The most elemental studio set up is the table top studio. This is attractive because you can set it up virtually anywhere and dismantle it when not in use. With a table top set up you can shoot small articles like glassware, ceramics, coins, stamps and toys. All you need do is to cover the table with some scenic paper,

either a sheet of white card or a curved drape of white material.

Another approach is to invest in a tent or cube light box. This sets up a soft, shadow free environment, perfect for almost any subject matter. Its only limitation is the size of subject it will house. It could even be used outdoors, with the sun itself as the light source.

Background. You have to create an environment for your studio photography. The last thing you want to see in all your shots is the living room wallpaper. So think of large pieces or rolls of white paper or cloth as your background.

A cyclorama or "cyc" is a shadowless, infinite background that is used by still photographers and movie-makers to isolate the subject and remove any confusing background detail. The ultimate cyc fills the background not only directly behind the subject but also off to each side.

In its simplest form you can roll a background cloth or paper down from behind and beneath your subject, of sufficient length to fill the viewfinder and far enough behind the subject to avoid unwanted shadows. The cyc material can be a length of heavy white material or a roll of scenic white paper, available from pro photo suppliers. If you use material make sure it's clean and all wrinkles are ironed out. You'll

A beginner's set-up. Two monobloc flash units comprise this Visatec kit.



Serious flash. The Visatec 384 Signature kit has three flash units, well suited for the advanced user.

also need a sturdy, adjustable pair of support stands for the cyc.

With this sort of setup you can attack full length subjects, standing models, even groups of two or three people.

Kitting up. Deciding on flash units and accessories that will suit the needs of a newcomer to studio or table top photography is the first task.

Your shopping list should include flash units, a flash meter, scenic paper, necessary stands plus accessories such as flash umbrellas et cetera.

To help, we asked two well-known suppliers, Baltronics and Kayell, to suggest three levels of home studio kit, with model details and prices.

Baltronics recommendations

Beginner's kit:

Visatec 204 special kit consisting of: two Solo 400B 120J monobloc flash units. Soloflex 60x60cm softbox. Standard reflector and barn doors. White 80cm umbrella and spill kill reflector. Five-metre sync cable. Travel bag.
Sub total: \$1500

Plus:

Visatec FM-2000 Flash meter: \$495
Two generic light stands: \$110
Tre-D Boss background kit: \$395
Roll of seamless background paper: \$155
Foba Coklo clamp: \$25

Grand total: \$2680

Advanced kit:

Visatec Solo 384 Signature kit consisting of: Solo 400B 120J monobloc, Solo 800B 300J monobloc, Solo 1600B 600J monobloc flash units.
Standard reflector.
Set of barn doors.
Honeycomb grid set to standard reflector.
One Soloflex 60x60cm and one Soloflex 80x80cm softbox.
IR Trigger.
Five metre sync cable.
Travel bag.
Sub total: \$3100

Plus:

Sekonic L358 Flash Meter: \$770
Three large generic light stands 1.2-3.0m: \$270
Tre-D Boss background kit: \$395
Roll of seamless background paper: \$155
Foba Coklo clamp: \$25

Grand total: \$4715**Semi-pro kit:**

Broncolor Minicom 80 Expert kit consisting of: three Minicom 80 600J monobloc flash units.
Two P70 standard reflectors.
Umbrella reflector.
80cm silver umbrella.
Pulsoflex C 60x100cm softbox.
IRX2 IR transmitter.
Five-metre sync cable.
Travel bag.
Three Junior Air cushioned light stands.
One stand bag.
Sub total: \$9300

Bringing expertise to bear. Three powerful monoblocs in the Broncolor Minicom 80 Expert kit are aimed at the semi-pro home studio operator.



All the kit. Elinchrom's Style FX600 kit has more power and would suit the Semi-Pro photographer.

Plus:

Sekonic L358 Flash Meter: \$770
P70 Honeycomb grid set: \$410
Tre-D Boss background kit: \$395
Roll of seamless background paper: \$155
Foba Coklo clamp: \$25

Grand total: \$11,055**Kayell recommendations****Beginner's kit:**

Elinchrom D-Lite 4 to Go flash kit consisting of:
Two Elinchrom D-Lite 4 (400WS) flash heads
Two-head soft case
16cm reflector
Two 60cm softboxes
Umbrella and stand set
Instructional DVD on lighting
Sub total: \$1695

Plus:

Sekonic L-308S light meter: \$572

Grand total: \$2267**Advanced kit:**

Elinchrom Style FX400/400/400 To Go kit consisting of
Three Elinchrom Style 400FX (400WS) flash heads
Three-head case
Two 16cm reflectors
60cm softbox
White umbrella and three stands
Instructional DVD on lighting



Step up. For the advanced user, Elinchrom's Style FX400 kit would be ideal.

Sub total: \$3485

Plus:

Sekonic L-308S light meter: \$572

Grand total: \$4057**Semi-pro kit:**

Elinchrom Style RX600/600/600 To Go kit consisting of
Three Elinchrom Style RX 600 (600WS)
Three-head case
Two 16cm reflectors
One snoot
70cm Rotolux softbox
White umbrella and three stands
Instructional DVD on lighting
Sub total: \$5682

Plus:

Sekonic L-308S light meter: \$572

Grand total: \$6254

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By Anthony Caruana

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Printing on the go

ONE of the hassles I face as a regular traveller is that some of the infrastructure I take for granted in the office just isn't mobile. Thankfully, technology has bounded along and I can get internet connectivity just about anywhere and my PowerBook has enough grunt for the work I do. However, it's only been recently that I've been able to print on the road.

I had a look at two portable, wireless printers; the Canon Pixma iP90 and HP's Deskjet 460cb. Both these units can run totally unwired through their battery packs and Bluetooth. It's a good idea to get the latest drivers, especially if you're using an Intel Mac, as some printers still ship with Power PC drivers that don't work well with Rosetta.

Canon iP90. The iP90 certainly looks right at home next to a MacBook or PowerBook with its metallic finish and black trim. With the optional battery pack it's about the size of a ream of A4 paper. The Bluetooth module for the printer is optional and only took a few seconds to install. You can also connect to the printer by USB and Infrared.

Text printout was very clear, but I was a little annoyed that it took a few seconds for the ink to dry — meaning that I often smeared my page when removing it from the printer. Photos printed on Canon's photographic stock didn't suffer the same issue and were touchable as soon as I removed them from the printer. However, I couldn't get decent images to print on other photographic paper — potentially a significant problem.

As a portable printer, the iP90 tips the scales at about 2.2kg with the battery. At just 52mm thick, Canon's portable printer will easily fit into most laptop backpacks. While the specifications say that the iP90 is 31x17cm, the real specs end up closer to 31x20 if you buy and use the optional battery pack.

At \$449 for the printer the iP90 seems like good value but the battery pack and Bluetooth module add \$200 and \$150 respectively, making this an expensive add-on to your mobile kit.

HP Deskjet 460cb. HP's 460cb is an interesting device. For starters, as well as supporting PictBridge for directly connecting cameras so that you can print without a PC, it also has CF and SD/MMC slots so you can put the memory card from your camera straight into the printer. This is a great feature as it allows you to print your images on the road without burning any camera battery down.

The CF slot on the 460cb serves a second purpose. You can purchase HP's CF WiFi (802.11b) or Bluetooth cards so that you can use this printer cable-free. Sadly, WiFi printing from the 460cb using the optional WiFi card is not supported on the Mac.

In addition, there's a USB input on the 460cb that can be used to connect a Bluetooth dongle if you don't want to spend extra cash on a genuine HP peripheral. I tested the 460cb with a no-name Bluetooth dongle and it worked perfectly.

Printing documents on standard A4 paper worked well, with none of the smearing I experienced with the Canon iP90. Images printed from iPhoto were


crisp, with colours faithfully reproduced. However, printing was very slow with a single 4x6 image taking several minutes to print using the latest drivers from HP's web site.

From a portability point of view, the 460cb weighs in at 2.3kg at 34x16x8cm with its battery in. I struggled to fit it into my fairly hefty Crumpler backpack. The Canon iP90 is 3cm thinner and easier to fit into a backpack.

The 460cb retails for a reasonable \$499. While this is \$50 more than the Canon iP90, this includes the battery and you can add Bluetooth with a \$50 Bluetooth dongle making it a far more economical deal.

The last word. If it came down to price alone then HP Deskjet 460cb would win hands down. After all, you can get a full wireless printing rig for under \$500 that can deal with just about anything you'll need to throw at it while you're on road. However, the slow photo printing might be a concern and its size is a problem.

The Canon Pixma iP90 is the smaller unit. It weighs about 10 percent less than the 460cb and is 40 percent thinner. However, that portability comes at a significant cost and the print quality I got didn't justify that expense.

If I had to buy one of these units then I'd be spending my hard earned on the HP Deskjet 460cb. 





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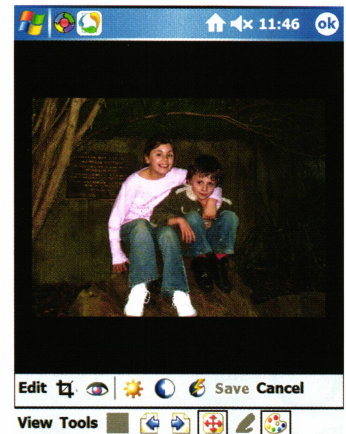
ARMED with a Pocket PC and some useful add-ons, both professional and amateur photographers can get more from their camera.

DOF 1.0. There are number of factors to take into account when shooting an image. Depth of field (DOF) is the distance in front of and behind the subject that appears to be in focus. For any given lens setting, there is only one distance at which a subject is precisely in focus, but focus falls off gradually on either side of that distance, so there is a region in which the blurring is tolerable. DOF 1.0 computes the depth of field for a lens given its focal length, f-stop, focus distance and the desired resolution at the film plane. It reports the near and far focus limits as well as the hyperfocal distance.

Expose. Determining the amount of exposure, or light that reaches the photo-

graphic medium (be that film or a CCD), is critical for getting great shots. By manipulating your camera's exposure you can create interesting effects or get better shots in low-light conditions. Expose is an automated exposure guide that computes recommended exposures given film speed, filter film and scene illumination level. It can operate in either aperture or shutter priority mode and it incorporates knowledge of the proper exposure for different lighting situations and includes corrections for filters and film reciprocity failure. The filter, film and scene databases are customisable so you can add your own information to the database.

Imageer. Once the photo is taken you'll need a decent viewing and editing tool. On the Pocket PC nothing beats Spb Imageer. It can open files directly from your storage card, as long as it's the same type as your Pocket



PC and provides tools for cropping, adjusting brightness, contrast and colour balance as well as editing tools for correcting common image problems such as red-eye. Think of it as iPhoto for the Pocket PC.

If you prefer to use a Palm device then there are plenty of library applications similar to the inbuilt Media program on newer Palms, but few with the same image editing ability as Imageer. Although they can't fix red-eye, MobiSystems Paint and Resco Photo Viewer let you make many adjustments to your images.

When you consider the cost of image editing software for your Mac, Spb Imageer represents excellent value at \$US14.95. I've been using it since it was first released about three years ago and it is still the best application of its type for PDAs. ☞

Ready, JetCet, Go!

ONE of the most significant omissions in the Windows Mobile operating system is the lack of native support for printing. However, this limitation can be overcome with Westtek's JETCET Print.

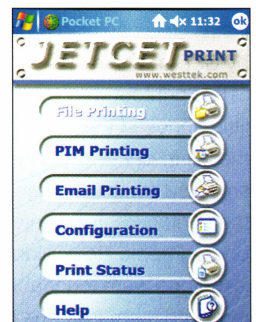
JETCET bundles printer drivers for a wide variety of HP, Canon, and Epson printers and provides an interface so that you can print your documents, PIM data and e-mail. Rather than adding a "print" command to each application, it provides an application that renders documents into a form that JETCET can send to your printer by Bluetooth, Infrared or over your network.

In testing the software, I sent jobs to the Canon Pixma iP90 and HP Deskjet 460cb through their Bluetooth interfaces. The HP printer posed no problems as it's natively

supported by JETCET, but the Canon wasn't supported so I couldn't use it with the software.

There's a list of compatible printers at the Westtek site so you can check for your printer prior to purchasing the software. If your printer isn't listed it's still worth using the 15-day trial as you may find that using the settings for a similar printer will work for you.

It's obvious that JETCET hasn't been updated in some time. For example, the Canon iP90 has been on the market for quite some time but isn't supported. Likewise, Windows Mobile 5 has been around for a year or so but only the older document formats (for Pocket Word and Excel) are supported even though there's native support for the desktop versions of Word and Excel documents in the OS.



If you really need to print from your Pocket PC then JETCET may do the job. At just \$US8.95 it's not expensive and might just bail you out in an emergency. ☞



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By David Holloway



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Download and upgrade

iTunes gets a facelift and more

VERSION 7 of iTunes introduces a slew of new features. Some work well, some are a little puzzling and some are very dependent on the age of the Mac you own.

Style is the first change — both iTunes and the iTunes Store (note the absence of the word "Music" in the title) have received a facelift. Changes like that are a matter of taste and in this case I think it's been a backward step. Bland would be the description I'd use.

The layout has changed noticeably. The left-hand side now has three sections: Library, Store and Playlists. The main change here is when you download a podcast or purchase music from the iTunes Store (ITS), a Download manager appears under the Store. You can prioritise and pause downloads, with an interface very reminiscent of the Safari Downloads feature.

There is also now a Movie option under the Library section — this displays any videos you've added to iTunes but unfortunately the Australian iTS hasn't added full-length movies like its US counterpart. Video playback has been improved, including on-screen controls similar to the full screen mode in QuickTime. Resolution of videos purchased from the ITS has also been improved.

Games are also a purchase option via the ITS now — nine are on offer at \$7.49 each. The games will only work on 5th generation iPods with video (after a software upgrade) and will not play on your Mac.

Any CDs you import into iTunes can have cover art added from Apple's database. This is a hit and miss affair — a lot of my Australian music continues to have blank covers, as does anything from an artist not signed up with the ITS. You'll also be using storage space for album art, which can be an issue with older iPods or large music libraries. Soundtrack and compilation albums can also throw the Cover Art

feature off course — you can end up with twelve separate album covers although you can remedy it by selecting "Join CD Tracks" from the Advanced menu. A final gripe is the lack of responsiveness of cover art during playback in the Cover Flow view. The artwork will appear when you click on the first song in a playlist, but when the second song starts the artwork does not change unless you click to highlight the new song playing.

Greater attention has been paid to managing your music in this update. Multiple libraries are now officially supported, including the option to have libraries on different hard drives. A big win is a Backup to Disc option found under the File menu — you can backup your whole library, only your purchased music or files changes since last backup. Just insert a CD or DVD and iTunes will fill each disc and ask for more until the backup is completed. You can also restore your library from those same discs — just insert the first disc and again select Backup to Disc and you'll be given the restore option.

On the audio playback side the only real change is Gapless Playback — it allows for continuous audio for albums designed to be played that way (think *Dark Side of the Moon* or *Abbey Road*). If you use the crossfade feature in iTunes you'll need to select the Gapless Playback option within each song file's information (File>Get Info>Options) but otherwise it will run as standard.

Not all smooth sailing. I have to mention the fairly significant number of problems experienced by people upgrading to iTunes 7. At time of writing the following issues were being widely reported:

- Authorisation issues with videos. Some customers are being told that their computer is not authorised to play a file they've previously had no problems

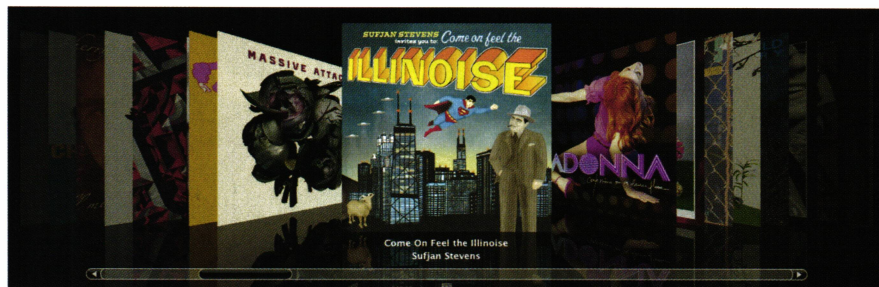
playing. No remedy at time of writing except re-authorising each file when requested.

- Repeated crashing. Remedies include disabling Sound Enhancer, deleting preference files and removing third-party add-ons.
- Assorted display issues. Users of older Macs (particularly those that don't meet the "additional video requirements" — see below) report the interface "breaking up" or leaving artefacts when switching between views. Sometimes this can be remedied by dragging the iTunes window off screen and then on again to force it to redraw. Sometimes this just doesn't work.

[iTunes 7.01, released after this article was written, addressed some of these issues but not all. *AMW* advises users to backup their iTunes libraries before upgrading — M.JC.PJ]

The System requirements for iTunes 7 are a little strange. The minimum requirements are OS X 10.3.9 and a 500MHz G3 Mac with 256MB RAM and QuickTime 6.5.2 or later. However, there are "additional video requirements" of a 1GHz G4 Mac with QuickTime 7.1.3 or later and 16MB of video RAM. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the "additional video requirements" are anything but optional.

The last word. The new features in iTunes 7 are more than just evolution and the backup feature alone makes it a worthwhile upgrade — particularly given it remains a free download. Just be aware of the video requirements if you use an older Mac. ☒



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www.jbl.com
Check out OnTime

Something to wake up to

IT'S not often I fall in love with a piece of gear, but it's happened with the JBL

OnTime. It's impressed me in two ways: looks and sound.

It looks totally different to anything else on the market at present. The OnTime's speakers line the vertical curves on each side, with your iPod slotting in the universal dock under the arch. Adapters are provided if you want a tight fit on the dock or you can just slot your iPod in without an adapter.

The sound quality is the best I've heard from an all-in-one system. JBL uses a couple of proprietary technologies that give a full 360-degree sound. The OnTime packs enough grunt to fill a large room.

Configuration of the OnTime is via the LCD screen and buttons on the front panel — it's intuitive and I managed to avoid the manual. Once your iPod is docked, and you've

selected iPod as your sound source, play-back is as simple as pressing the OnTime's power button — it will turn on your iPod and start playing from whatever playlist you've selected. Hit the power button again and your iPod will turn off. The volume level you set is remembered between uses so once you've set a comfortable level for your room you don't need to touch it again.

Any other audio devices can be connected via the stereo minijack on the rear of the OnTime. AM and FM radio bands are supported for the more traditional clock radio feel.

The clock radio itself covers all the bases — you can select either your iPod, the radio or a tone as your alarm and multiple alarms can be set including weekday- and weekend-only options (as well as the obligatory snooze button). There's a sleep timer if you like to fall



asleep to music and a backup battery so your alarm will still sound in a blackout.

This is a piece of bedroom art with sound quality to match. The OnTime isn't cheap at \$400 but this is a classic example of getting what you pay for. The OnTime comes in black or white and the Australian distributor is Conexus (02 9975 2799).



Hot Links

www.alteclansing.com
The M602

Tough stuff

THE M602 is a stylish and sturdy addition to Altec-Lansing's long line of all-in-one iPod speaker docks. The speaker grill is metal and the whole thing feels like it can take a beating.

The speaker unit actually contains four speakers — two drivers and two tweeters. Bass-enhancement technology is included and, for the size of the speaker, it does put out high quality sound. As with the JBL OnTime I was able to fill a large room with sound without pushing the M602 to its limits, and there was no obvious distortion.

There are volume and bass/treble controls on the M602 itself as well as Play/Forward/Back, with the same options replicated on the wireless remote. A headphone jack is also standard — which seems a little strange given you need an MP3 player to



hear any music and they obviously all have headphone jacks.

I've said "MP3 players" there because the dock will take portable players other than iPods. A cable is supplied to connect non-iPods to the audio input on the rear of the unit. The dock is purely a cradle in this case and no charging occurs. There's also a composite video output if you have an iPod with video (the actual cable isn't included though).

I had the M602 at the same time as the JBL OnTime and I have to say that the OnTime wins out on having a fuller sound, probably due to its unique speaker placement. That said, the M602 provides a compact, quality option that will slot subtly into most homes. The M602 retails for \$360 and is distributed by Innovision (03 9817 7799).



Hot Links

www.zcover.com
Quick off the mark

New nanos already covered

Canadian company zCover jumped on the bandwagon a mere four days after the announcement of the second-generation iPod nano, releasing its iSA micro2 case. It's a silicone-based case that comes in ten colours (including a glow-in-the-dark option) and includes a hard crystal screen protector and a removable lanyard. zCover products are distributed in Australia by MacSense (02 9788 3288).

By Seamus Byrne



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Pro File: Geoff King

GEOFF KING is a freelance video producer who hails from Sydney and currently lives in Vietnam. He specialises in live event video production, working for large companies and ad agencies on launches and conferences.

He shared some time to tell us about live event production and working in a place like Vietnam.

Live event video versus more standard production. Discuss.

A lot of the difference is about adrenaline. Live events require you to do your best work despite outrageous deadlines, imperfect equipment, and demanding clients. You have to be able to roll with all of that, in the knowledge that in a couple of days it will all come down to a moment of truth — The Show. There's no second chance.

We also do a lot of video post-production work beforehand. Corporate branding loops, logo slides, promotional videos, short documentaries, animations and so on. When we get to the venue, we have to find a way to make everything work under pressure.

What's a recent big event you've been working on?

Honda has just started manufacturing the Honda Civic in Vietnam and they were looking for a "defining moment" launch. We put together a combined launch/exhibition/press conference and performed the show just twice.

My responsibility was to produce and present video material for 23 screens — seven projectors, 16 plasmas. Only the main stage used live-switched video, with two signals projected on five screens. One signal came straight from a PowerBook. The other went through a switcher/scaler to enable the use of cameras, DVDs and the client's presentation laptop.

Setting up and operating a large video rig involves a lot of skills on the "signal"

side of the rig, between an output signal and the images on the screens. Video switcher/scaler units, distribution amplifiers, and good cabling. This is all part of my job.

We face equipment challenges due to the small size of the market. We provided technical services for a major Intel conference last year and had to bring in three large video projectors from Malaysia because there was nothing suitable in-country.

How do the Macs hold up in live event video systems?

There are some unique requirements in live performance. Fortunately Apple seems to know about many of these — Keynote, for example, is light years ahead of PowerPoint for professional work, but there are still things missing.

I don't want to jinx myself, but the hardware has been very reliable. My only disappointment has been the disk bandwidth in laptops. We use FireWire drives to get around the limitation so we can play high-quality compressed video. Heavy video compression looks really cheap.

I'm just about to buy more equipment and I'm torn between buying a bunch of Mac minis or a Mac Pro with multiple video outputs. When you're pushing hard, you never have quite the machine you need. My Intel migration has been proceeding slowly, because I need rock-solid reliability, and I've been waiting on some software to be ported.

Although there are not a huge number of Macs here, I've been pleasantly surprised by the adoption of the Mac among creative professionals. Most of the local team are on PowerBooks and MacBooks, and the post-production facility I use is all Mac.

What are some of the third-party products you use?

During post, we use Blackmagic Decklink cards to get source material from broadcast-quality tapes into Final Cut Pro.



The core of my live video setup is Isadora, a graphical programming environment for "interactive control of digital media". I use this to build the various scenes, control playback of multiple networked machines, handle backup stills, cue sound effects, control video switchers using RS232, interface with MIDI, and so on. Because it provides building blocks, I can do a lot of things that are difficult on more rigid systems. Every live show has unique challenges, and Isadora is an extraordinary toolbox.

What is the software piracy situation there nowadays?

There is a lot of software piracy, but that's changing as Vietnam further integrates into the world economy.

The situation is complicated by international software prices being so high by local standards. The Tiger upgrade cost more than a month's salary for my administrative assistant. Microsoft has the same problem. Don't even get me started on the pricing of Final Cut Studio or Adobe Creative Suite.

How has it been working with local talent in Vietnam?

Some of the people I'm working with are up there with the best anywhere in the world. On the other hand, most have very little production experience and that is a huge part of live work.

Overall, Vietnam is a great place to work. My local colleagues are friendly, intelligent and resourceful. I approach every job knowing that teaching is a major part of my mission, and that's very rewarding.

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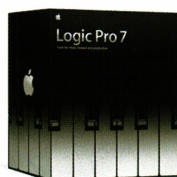
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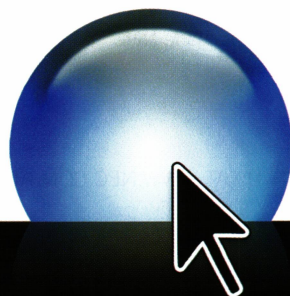


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*Model 20WGX2 features a 6ms response rate.

One to One: the conclusion

I'VE just read a paper entitled "Posion Vacant: new learner ... Skills required: multiliterate" (ironically, I suspect they meant to write "position"). I found this weird because I don't think that those positions are vacant. I'd suggest that our kids are multi-literate already, but their literacies lie in areas other than their teachers'.

Recently, I was in a workshop with some 20 kids from year three to year six and I saw nine-year-olds cope with coordinate geometry. The premise behind this workshop was that we rarely ask enough of kids. After using Microworlds, I asked the students some questions:

- "What was different about today?"

Student A "We were with computers all day instead of doing work".

Student B "It was much more fun than a normal school day".

Student C "Technology's fun".

- "Who found it hard?"

(All put up their hand).

- "Let's explore this. You found it hard, like Maths, but you enjoyed it. How come?"

Student D "It's more of a challenge, more of a fun sort of challenge. Like, Maths ... you're just sitting there writing down questions".

Further questioning asked the students if they knew what an X coordinate or a Y coordinate was and few could tell me. They could explain how a Logo turtle could be moved about the screen and how numbers could tell you where he was, even to the extent of using negative and positive numbers. This is stuff usually attempted in year eight and here were much younger students coping admirably.

If you're a regular reader of this column (I know there's one out there somewhere) then you'll recognise this recurring theme: kids love working with a range of technologies, being creative, and producing stuff.

There's no vacancy here. The deficit is in our teachers' experience. The students didn't have the language to articulate what they understood and their teachers' usual way of instruction was linear and divorced from real life.

Last century, when I was completing my Dip Ed, I was frustrated by a fellow graduate who thought "PRJ" were the initials of an educationalist — but this was not as frustrating as dealing with the seemingly clockwork determinism of Piaget's theories. It is this clockwork that drives a lot of syllabi and is dismantled by kids working with technology such as in the Microworlds session above.

Given the average age of Australia's teachers, and the glacial rate at which curricular change occurs, it's a chicken and egg problem. You won't get all your teachers up to speed with technology (or curriculum) and you may think you need to before introducing a 1:1 laptop program.



Hot Links

www.ted.com

The Technology, Entertainment, Design conference held in Monterey each year is now videocast

www.editlib.org

Search for "Posion Vacant"

web.mac.com/oldmitchelton/iWeb

Visit the web site for the Kid's Congress held most recently in Brisbane

Perhaps immersion can make it work. After all, how did you learn to speak?

Those who have taught in a 1:1 environment speak of it as just that: an environment, more so than a tool. In general, you will find more collaborative learning, more creative work and more diverse forms of learning.

Nicholas Negroponte claims that, in Maine, you can't find one teacher who is opposed to the state-wide 1:1 program there, despite the 65-70 percent who were violently opposed to Governor Angus King's plan in 2001. (You can hear Negroponte and Sir Ken Robinson speak on education at the TED podcasts — see "Hot links".)

I have to tell you about another event that can cause teachers to have a similar sort of epiphany that I thought only occurred on the way to Damascus.

KidsCongress is an international, award-winning technology and learning conference for nine- to twelve-year-olds, which gets the digital generation to take part in fun, problem-solving workshops using ICT tools. What's different about this mini conference is that it's run by kids for kids — a local primary school that's noted for its forward thinking and enthusiasm for new technology is picked as a host school and the kids do the rest. They manage a \$20,000 budget, they meet and greet, they manage the media and they have fun with over 150 other kids.

I attended the recent Brisbane incarnation of this event, overseen by Paul Shaw, Education Office, Curriculum for Brisbane Catholic Education, who was introduced to the concept in New Zealand by Mike Anderson, of North Loburn.school. Paul describes all the workshop presenters as "innovative and techno-savvy teachers who get paid release from their schools to come and teach mixed ability groups on how to make and do cool stuff with computers".

All the machines in use were MacBooks, supplied generously by Mac1, the local reseller. For two days we were knee-deep in cameras, probes, Lego, green screens and Nike shoe sensors.

No-one lost anything, broke anything or stole anything. Everyone just had what Seymour Papert describes as "hard fun" — the same hard fun as the kids who were introduced in this column.

To quote a major political movement in Australia in the seventies: "It's Time".

Time to put the heart before the course. 🐢

As an educator, Martin Levins likes empowering people to create using computing technologies.





Hot Links

www.gmail.com
www.aol.com.au

Web-based mail providers

home.comcast.net/~themacgeek/0/0.html

iCalMail AppleScript

Get more from Mail

Express post

APPLE'S Mail is not only easy to use, but also much more powerful than it may appear. If you feel that you're not making the most of Mail 2.0 (bundled with Mac OS X 10.4), try using these tips to dig into some of its interesting and less obvious features.

Supercharge your searches.

When you're trying to find a certain message in your vast and unwieldy e-mail archives, typing a word or two into Mail's Spotlight search field doesn't always get the job done. Get the specificity you need by using Boolean expressions.

To indicate an AND search in Mail — in other words, both search terms must be present in the message — use an ampersand (&). For example, you might type `jack & jill` in Mail's Spotlight field to find messages containing both jack and jill. To specify an OR search — meaning that either, but not necessarily both, of the terms must be present — use a pipe character (|). For example, type `jack | jill` to find either of those names in a message. To specify a NOT search, use an exclamation point (!). For example, type `jack & (jill | hill) ! water` to

Find it. When you're looking for a specific message in your vast e-mail archives, narrow the search by using Boolean expressions in Mail's Spotlight field A. This works only if you select the Entire Message option B.

find messages containing jack and either jill or hill but not water (see the screenshot "Find it"). The parentheses group terms together so that a single AND, OR, or NOT applies to all of them. Be sure to include spaces between the terms whenever you type your search because if you don't, the search (for example, `jack|jill`) may not work.

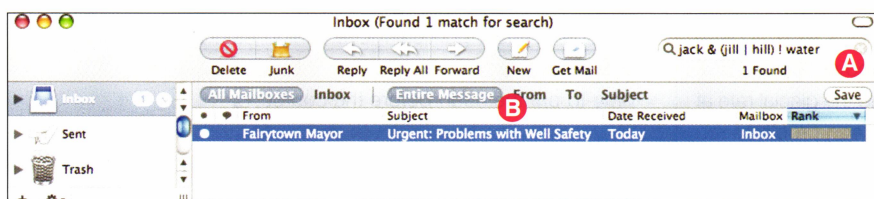
Boolean expressions work in Mail only if you select the Entire Message option. (After you type a search term in the application's Spotlight field, you'll see the Entire Message button above the message list.) You can't do Boolean searches on just the Subject or From field, for instance.

Check Gmail or AOL mail. If you have an e-mail account with Google's Gmail service or AOL Australia, you don't have to bother with a web interface or AOL application. Check your messages with Mail instead. Go to Mail: Preferences, click on the Accounts tab, and use the following settings:

Gmail. In Mail's Accounts tab, create a new POP account by clicking on the plus-sign (+) button and selecting POP from the Account Type menu. Fill out the other fields here and click on Continue. In the window that appears, enter `pop.gmail.com` in the Incoming Mail Server field. In the User Name field, type your full e-mail address (`user_name@gmail.com`). Then enter your usual Gmail password in the Password field and click on Continue.

In the next window, enter `smtp.gmail.com` in the Outgoing Mail Server field, specify your full Gmail address as the User Name, and type your password. Select the Use Authentication option and click on Continue. In the confirmation screen, click on Continue again and then click on Done. If you're a Gmail pack rat, brace yourself — a lot of messages will download the first time you access them this way.

AOL Australia. In Mail's Accounts tab, create a new IMAP account by clicking on the plus-sign button and selecting IMAP from the Account Type menu. Fill in the rest of the fields and click on Continue. In the Incoming Mail Server field, type `imap.aol.com` (even with AOL Australia, the mail server has a .com address). In the User Name field, just type the portion of your AOL



| | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|-----|
| <tc-comments@tidbit... | Order Notice: Take Control... | Mar |
| <tc-comments@tidbit... | Order Notice: Take Control... | Mar |
| <tc-co 17 nts@tidbit... | Order Notice: Take Control... | Mar |
| <tc-comments@tidbit... | Order Notice: Take Control... | Mar |
| <tc-comments@tidbit... | Order Notice: Take Control... | Mar |
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| <tc-comments@tidbit... | Order Notice: Take Control... | May |

Pick any number. How many messages do you have selected at the moment? Just drag any of the selected messages slightly (without leaving the current pane) and a badge appears on the pointer with the total count.

anyway, at least make sure Mail actually knows what your full name is. Go to Mail: Preferences, click on Accounts, and fill in the Full Name field.

Count your messages. Mail always displays the number of messages in the currently selected mailboxes at the top of the viewer window. What if you want to know how many messages you've selected? Easy: after you've selected the messages, drag them slightly, as though you were going to move them. A red badge with a number appears next to your cursor (see the screenshot "Pick any number"). Release the mouse button before leaving the message list and you'll know the count, but the messages won't actually move.

Use e-mail to send reminders. Sometimes you might prefer to send an e-mail message automatically – without having to launch Mail yourself. With a little tinkering in iCal, you can do just that. When you create a new event in Apple's iCal, you can choose to receive a reminder message by e-mail. If you'd rather send a reminder to someone else – the forgetful colleague who's supposed to attend the meeting with you, for instance – download Chris J. Shull's free iCalMail (see "Hot links").

iCalMail's setup application creates a new iCal calendar for you. After assigning an event to that calendar, choose Open File from the Alarm pop-up menu. Then, from the Other pop-up menu beneath it, navigate to the iCalMail application. Now add one or more e-mail addresses to the Attendees list. At the selected time, iCalMail uses Mail to send out reminder messages. The subject is the event name, and the text is the contents of the Notes field. You can even send an attachment by entering its full file path in the Location field. For example, type ~/Documents/mydocument.doc if you want to attach the Word file mydocument.doc, located inside the your user folder/Documents folder.

address that comes before the @ sign. Fill in your password and click on Continue. For the outgoing mail server, type smtp.aol.com. As before, enter your user name (without @aol.com) and password. Select the Use Authentication option and click on Continue. In the confirmation screen, click on Continue again and then click on Done.

Juggle aliases in Mail. If you're a .Mac member, you can add up to five e-mail aliases to your account. These extra addresses all deliver mail to your regular inbox. Their purpose is to protect your main address from spam. Use an alias to sign up for online newsletters, for example, or to post on message boards. If the alias becomes flooded with junk mail, delete it and create a new one.

It's easy to use your aliases in Mail. Choose Mail: Preferences, click on the Accounts button, select your .Mac account, and click on Edit Email Aliases. Your web browser will open to your .Mac account. After you've set up one or more aliases here, they'll appear automatically in the Account pop-up menu in Mail's message-composition windows. To send a message using the alias as the From address, choose the alias from this menu.

Send It from the right address. Do you have a non-.Mac e-mail account

that has more than one address associated with it? For example, the messages for you@example.com.au and webmaster@example.com.au might both come to the same inbox. In Mail, you don't have to set up multiple accounts for each of these addresses to choose one as the From address on outgoing mail.

Instead, choose Mail: Preferences, click on the Accounts tab, and select the account. Type the multiple addresses in the Email Address field, separated by commas. Now, before sending a message, you can choose the From address you want to use from the pop-up Account menu.

Help the Junk Mail Filter. Mail's Junk Mail Filter is reasonably good and learns from its mistakes, as long as you conscientiously correct them by clicking on the Junk or Not Junk button. Some preference settings can throw it off, resulting in extra spam in your inbox.

Check for a common offender by going to Mail: Preferences and clicking on the Junk Mail tab. If the Message Is Addressed Using My Full Name option is selected, Mail gives a pass to any message that uses your full name in the To field. Unfortunately, it's all too easy for spammers to learn your full name, so I recommend making sure this option is not selected. If you'd like to use it

By Matthew Honan



Hot Links

www.myst strands.com

last.fm

Share your music tastes via iTunes

del.icio.us

Share your music tastes without iTunes

hype.non-standard.net

Find MP3 blogs

www.last.fm/user/emptyage

Add the author to your last.fm friends list

Network to new music

They're playing your song

YOU'VE probably heard of social-networking web sites such as Facebook, Flickr, and MySpace.com — online communities that let you establish a linked group of friends and contacts. Social networking is not merely a way to meet new people. It's also a good way to discover new music to replace the aging tracks on your iPod.

Software for music lovers.

Although iTunes can tell you what other people have purchased and what music is popular right now, there are also web sites and applications that take things a step further, helping you find a like-minded community simply by playing your favourite tracks in iTunes.

MyStrands. If you're interested in discovering music via the power of social networks and the hive mind, the free MyStrands service (see "Hot links") is a great starting point. MyStrands tracks information about the music you listen to, builds unique online charts, and has several interesting community features.

MyStrands scans your iTunes library and compares it with the MyStrands database. As you play songs in iTunes, MyStrands runs in a separate window, displaying track information and a Recommendations list of similar songs you might enjoy (recommendations are based on several aspects of the entire community's listening habits). There's also a field for entering tags — user-contributed keywords that describe the song. MyStrands downloads community tags from its database for each track, and you can add your own (see the screenshot "Leave your mark"). Tags can be anything — not only simple genre

keywords, such as jazz and folk, but also keywords that express how the music makes you feel, what it reminds you of, or anything else that you think categorises it.

MyStrands builds a database of all your tags, which you can view by clicking on the Tag Cloud icon in the lower right-hand corner of the MyStrands window. The Tag Cloud window can display all your tags or all the community tags for songs in your library. Click on any of the tags, and MyStrands will list all the tracks in your library that share it. You can then click on the Create Playlist In iTunes button, and MyStrands will make a new iTunes playlist with all those songs. Even if you've never tagged a track, you can use MyStrands' community tags to generate playlists.

The program also helps you find compatible friends. On the MyStrands web site, you can click on the Discover Members link to find people with musical tastes similar to yours. The site will even generate a list of potential buddies — the list is based on what you're listening to right now, what you've listened to this week or month, or your all-time listening habits, and it includes percentage ratings that show

how likely a match MyStrands thinks each person is. Visit the site to browse user-created playlists and more.

Last.fm. Designed to help you find fresh tunes, Last.fm (see "Hot links") combines a social-networking web site with Mac software. To get started, you create a free account and download the Last.fm application — either the full app or the (currently unsupported) iScrobbler iTunes plug-in. Like MyStrands, the full Last.fm application lets you tag tracks and view community tags for songs in your library. However, its strongest features are its charting and networking options.

Launch the Last.fm app, and as you play songs in iTunes, Last.fm submits track data to your user page on its web site; iScrobbler lives in OS X's menu bar and submits track data in the background. (A handful of third-party applications, most notably Menuet, can also submit song data to Last.fm.) The Last.fm site maintains a database of every submitted track, and it records the information in charts on your user page. You can browse your charts by artist, album, and track to get a better idea of your weekly, monthly, and overall listening habits. Last.fm even gives you the code for publishing your



My Friends Online

tomez
The Amps – Empty Glasses (LP version) *just listened*
The Amps – Breaking the Split Screen Barrier 4 minutes ago
The Amps – Full on Idle 7 minutes ago

billturner
The Thermals – Let Your Earth Quake, Baby 1h and 46m ago
Tortoise – It's All Around You 1h and 51m ago
Quannum Artists – Hardcore (Instrumental) Hip-Hop - DJ Shadow 1h and 59m ago

nbomb65
The Rakes – Dark Clouds 2h and 36m ago
The Magnetic Fields – You Love to Fall 2h and 59m ago
The Radio Dept – The City Limit 2h and 48m ago

intrepidind
Ingrid Burrington – First Break Up Song 4h and 51m ago
American Public Media – The Writers Almanac for Monday, July 24, 2006 1h and 3m ago
VH1 – Best Night Ever, Wednesday, July 19th 2006 9h and 8m ago

tweebiscuit
The Velvet Underground – Ride Into the Sun (demo) 14h and 5h ago
The Velvet Underground – Oh Sweet Nuthin' 14h and 13m ago
The Velvet Underground – Train Round the Bend 14h and 16m ago

Leave your mark. In MyStrands, you can use tags to categorise your tracks in all sorts of ways.

charts on your blog (MyStrands has a similar feature).

As your user profile grows, Last.fm's database becomes increasingly valuable. After analysing your listening habits and comparing them with those of other users, the site will put a Neighbours list – people with similar listening habits – on your user page.

Your neighbours' charts are an excellent resource – just as you can browse your own charts over time, you can browse theirs, too. Checking out their top tracks will help you find new releases that might interest you. Find an intriguing artist or track? Click on the track name, and if the track is in Last.fm's database, it will play in your web browser.

Neighbour Radio is another great way to discover new tunes. You can access this feature in the Last.fm application itself, or by going to your Last.fm user page and clicking on the Neighbour Radio link. This will play a stream of music that your neighbours have been listening to. As you listen, these songs are added to your charts so you can find them later. The player also has a heart-shaped Love button you can click on to add a track to your Recently Loved list.

When you find a neighbour who really shares your tastes, you can click on an icon on his or her user page to add that neighbour to your Friends list (see the screenshot "With a little help"). You can also add people you already know to your Friends list – this is especially useful when you're just starting to

establish a pool of recommended music (to kick things off, feel free to add me as your friend – see "Hot links").

Music in the web world. Although software that works with iTunes is a great way to find new music, you don't always have to download a program – you can turn to the web as well.


Del.icio.us. The popular social book-marking site del.icio.us (see "Hot links") lets anyone upload a link and tag it with keywords. Since del.icio.us users update the site millions of times a day, searching its tags can help you find the absolute newest music on the web. To access all its features, start by signing up for a free account.

You can view URLs associated with any tag on del.icio.us by entering a keyword in its search box.

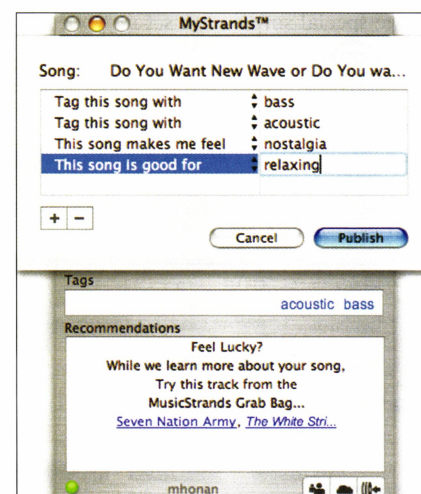
You can also enter a search string directly in your browser; for example, if you wanted to see all the URLs tagged with the keyword jazz, you'd enter <http://del.icio.us/tag/jazz> – the site would return everything users had tagged with that keyword, with the newest items presented first. To refine a search further, you can combine keywords by putting a plus sign (+) between them. So, for example, you could enter <http://del.icio.us/tag/jazz+MP3> to find all the URLs tagged with both jazz and MP3. If you're unsure how to start, try searching for one of your favourite bands – the site will not only return a list of links with the band's name, but also display a Common Tags box, which you can use as a jumping-off point, on the side of the page.

If there are certain tags or tag sets that you want to check daily, you can subscribe to them in two ways. The first is by clicking on the RSS link at the bottom of the del.icio.us page to send newly tagged items directly to your RSS reader of choice. The second is by clicking on the Settings link in the top right-hand corner of the page, and then clicking on the Subscriptions link on the following page (this works only if you register). In the resulting page, enter the appropriate tag or tags (connected with a plus sign if there is more than one) in the Tag field; then click on the Subscribe button. New URLs will now show up in your del.icio.us inbox on the site.

The del.icio.us site lets you see not only what people are linking to, but also who's doing the linking. Notice that a lot of your favourite links come from one person? You can use either of the aforementioned methods to subscribe to a particular user's del.icio.us links. Many MP3 bloggers maintain a page of del.icio.us links that point out new bands and singles.

MP3 blogs. Speaking of MP3 bloggers, music weblogs are another way to find new music by harnessing other people's tastes. A good place to start is The Hype Machine (see "Hot links"), an audio-blog aggregator that tracks uploads across a wide range of music blogs. It can also help you find music blogs suited to your individual tastes. 

With a little help. See what your friends have been listening to lately, and click on song titles to preview them online using Last.fm.



MyStrands™

Song: Do You Want New Wave or Do You wa...

Tag this song with: bass
Tag this song with: acoustic
This song makes me feel: nostalgic
This song is good for: relaxing

+ - Cancel Publish

Tags: acoustic bass

Recommendations

Feel Lucky?
While we learn more about your song, Try this track from the MusicStrands Grab Bag...
[Seven Nation Army](#), [The White Stripes](#)

mhonan



Hot Links

www.parallels.com

Download a trial version of Parallels Desktop

virtuedesktops.info

Virtual desktops — like what Leopard does only it's available now

Design for any browser

Explore Windows

DESIGNING web sites that look good in every browser can be heartbreaking work. Your carefully crafted site may look great in Mozilla Firefox and Apple Safari, and then become a jumbled mess in Microsoft Internet Explorer 6, the default browser for roughly 75 percent of web users. But how do you test pages in a browser that doesn't run in OS X?

Most Mac designers solve this problem by setting up an old PC next to their Mac — swivelling between the two to check changes. Other people rely on online services that create screenshots of a page using a variety of browsers — a process that can be unbearably slow. Now, thanks to Apple's Intel Macs, Mac web designers can have the best of all worlds — creating sites in OS X and testing them in Windows without so much as turning their heads. In fact, switching between the two involves just pressing the keys.

What you'll need. In addition to having an Intel Mac, you'll need some special software to set up your test system.

Parallels Desktop. Similar to Apple's Boot Camp software, Parallels Desktop (\$145 from Conexus, 02 9975 2799) lets you run multiple operating systems on one machine without significantly slowing down either system. Unlike Boot Camp, Parallels Desktop doesn't require you to reboot your computer every time you want to switch operating systems. This application can run Windows side by side with OS X, making it easy to jump between designing and testing your web pages. You can download a free 15-day trial version (see "Hot links") if you want to test it out.

Microsoft Windows. If you don't already have a copy of Windows, you'll need to buy one. You can use any flavour of Windows XP that you like. Windows XP

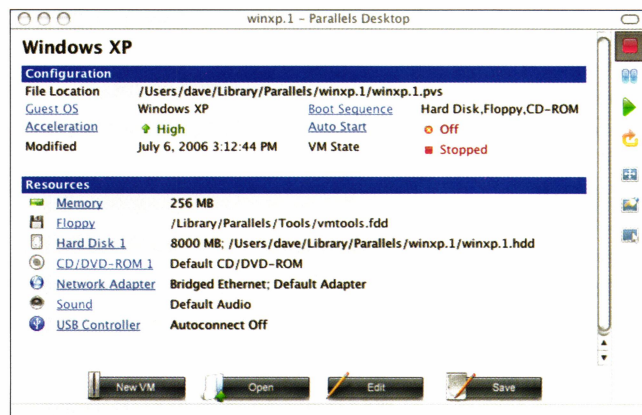
Home is \$299 and is perfect for testing your web designs.

VirtueDesktops. This free software (see "Hot links") lets you run both Windows and OS X in full-screen mode — switching back and forth with a simple keyboard command.

Step 1: Set up Parallels Desktop.

To install Windows on your Intel Mac, you must first create a virtual machine (VM). For this, you'll need Parallels Desktop. Once you've installed Parallels, double-click on the application (/Applications/Parallels/) to launch it. In the dialog box that appears, click on the New VM button to open the setup wizard. Follow the steps — select Windows from the Guest OS Type menu and Windows XP from the Guest OS Version menu — until the process is complete. When you're done, you should see the VM Property Page (see the screenshot "Heart of a virtual machine").

Step 2: Install Windows. Insert the Windows Installer CD. Return to Parallels' VM Property Page and click on the green Power On arrow to begin the Windows installation process. You'll be asked about your settings and preferences; you can stick to the default options by pressing the return key. After



Heart of a virtual machine. Parallels Desktop's Property Page controls the settings for the Virtual Machine that runs Windows.

this process, which takes about half an hour, you'll have a fully functional Windows machine running inside a floating Parallels Desktop window on your Mac (see the screenshot "A window for Windows").

Step 3: Install Parallels Tools.

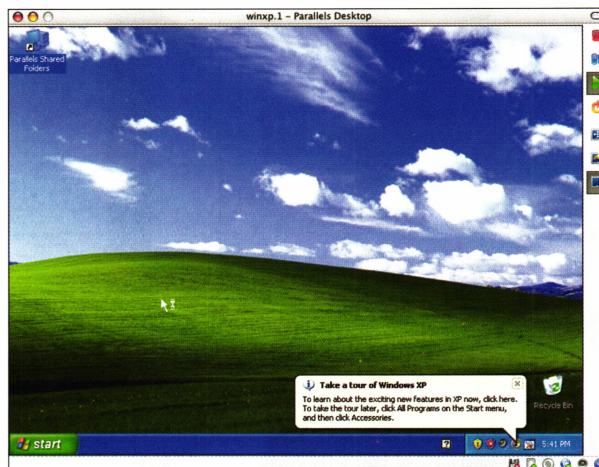
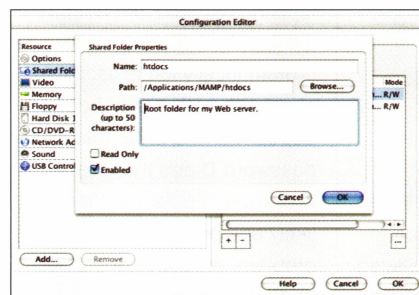
If you click inside the Windows workspace, it captures your cursor, preventing you from clicking outside that window. You can release the cursor by pressing control-option. To prevent this from happening at all, install Parallels Tools, included with Parallels Desktop. Parallels Tools makes it easy to display Windows at full-screen resolution and share files between the Mac and Windows.

From the Parallels menu bar on your Mac, choose VM: Install Parallels Tools. In the Parallels Tools setup wizard, click on Next until you get to the Setup Type pane. Select Complete, click on the Next button, and then click on Install. When you're done, restart Windows.

Step 4: Share files. To view your web pages in Windows, you'll need to give Internet Explorer access to them. Parallels lets you define one or more folders on your Mac as shared. Windows can view, add, and edit files in any shared folder. This means that if you define the folder holding your web pages as shared, you can open those pages using Internet Explorer in Windows.

First shut down Windows if it's running (click on the Start button in the lower left corner of the Windows desktop and choose Turn Off Computer, then click on the red Power Off button in the Parallels

Simple sharing. Parallels' Shared Folders feature gives a local copy of Windows access to folders on a Mac.



A window for Windows.

Parallels Desktop can run Windows XP in full-screen mode or inside a floating window on your Mac desktop (pictured here).

window). Then return to Parallels' VM Property Page window and click on the Edit button at the bottom of the window. This opens the Configuration Editor. Click on Shared Folders in the Resource column, and then click on the plus-sign (+) button in the right pane (see the screenshot "Simple sharing"). Name the folder, click on the Browse button, and then locate the folder on your hard drive that holds your web pages. Click on OK to close the Configuration Editor. In the VM Property Page, click on the Save button, and then click on the green arrow to launch Windows.

You should now see a Parallels Shared Folders shortcut on your Windows desktop. Double-click on this icon to see any shared folders you defined in Parallels.

Step 5: Create virtual desktops.

At this point, Windows appears inside a small Parallels Desktop window – which isn't an ideal setup if you're trying to get a sense of how your web page will look to an Internet Explorer user. You can run Windows in full-screen mode by choosing View: Fullscreen. You won't see any of the Parallels software menus or windows, nor will you see OS X's desktop. It'll look just like you're working on a Windows machine. The problem is that anytime you want to return to your Mac and make a quick change to your web page, you have to press option-return and leave full-screen mode. All that clicking can become painfully tedious.

The solution is to install VirtueDesktops. This application lets you create multiple

virtual screens – one for your Mac system and one for a full-screen view of Windows – and then switch between them with a simple keyboard command. It's like having multiple monitors, though only one is visible at a time.

Once you've downloaded VirtueDesktops, put it in your Applications folder. When you double-click on the VirtueDesktops application, an icon (resembling two overlapping rectangles) appears in the Mac's upper right menu bar. Click on it and choose Preferences from the pull-down menu. In the Preferences window, select the Launch Virtue On Login option. To see the name of the desktop you're currently viewing in the Mac's menu bar, select the Display Desktop Name option, and then close the window.

Click on the VirtueDesktops menu once more and choose Inspection: Desktops. On the left side of the window you should see a list of four virtual desktops (if you don't, try restarting). Double-click on the one labelled Mail and rename it Windows.

If Windows is currently running, shut it down. Quit Parallels Desktop. Press control-shift-right arrow to switch to the Windows virtual desktop. Launch Parallels Desktop and start Windows by clicking on the green Power On button. Finally, switch to full-screen mode by selecting View: Fullscreen. To return to your Mac desktop, simply press control-shift-left arrow. You can move back and forth this way as often as you like without ever leaving full-screen mode.

By Sean McNamara.

Start me up

Help folder

We answer our readers' questions

Each month STM 02 8338 0222 gives a Sports backpack valued at \$129.95 to the *Australian Macworld* reader who sends in the most intriguing Help folder query.

You need to carry your laptop, documents, gym gear and other bits and pieces. Do you carry two bags? No, you get an STM sports backpack. There's a large compartment for whatever you can cram in, space for your notes and exterior pockets for iPod, water bottle, newspaper etc. There's even an exterior mesh pocket for your lunch. The ergonomically designed back system and shoulder straps take much of the strain off your shoulders.

Like all STM bags, it doesn't look like there's a laptop inside the Sports backpack, keeping your precious notebook safe from preying eyes and wandering hands.

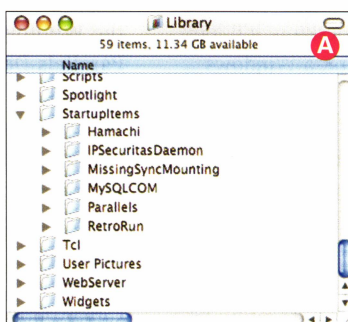
Send your query to matthew.powell@niche.com.au for consideration in Help folder. Include your full mailing address to be eligible to win the Sports backpack. All queries and solutions are the sole property of Niche Media.

■ Sean McNamara is a Sydney-based consultant trading as MacAssist.



Hot Links

www.maintain.se/cocktail/index.html
Perform routine maintenance on your Mac



1

■ I have an iMac G5 using Mac OS X and recently updated my software to v10.4.7. Since that update I have not been able to boot up effectively. My only solution has been to use a safe mode boot followed by a restart. I note on the Apple web site that many users have had the same problem since installing 10.4.7.

Could you please advise if this fault is to be corrected soon by a new update and if not is there a simple method for users to correct this startup glitch?

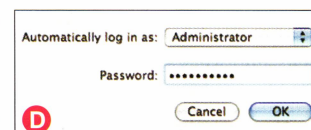
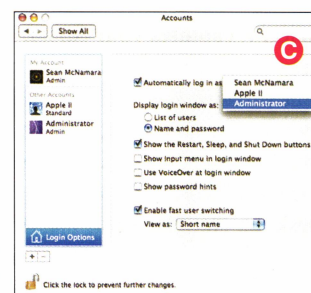
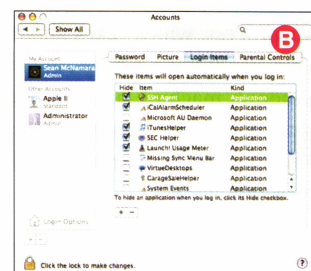
David Redfern
Thornlie, WA

I've seen this problem on various versions of Mac OS X v10.4 since its release. There never seems to be a clear pattern, and most users of Mac OS X v10.4.7 do not experience this problem.

Since you wrote, Mac OS X v10.4.8 has been released, and it would certainly be worthwhile updating in case Apple has cleared up the particular bug you are experiencing.

For some people, creating a new Location in the Network System Preferences Pane and recreating their network settings gets things up and running.

For others, re-installing programs which start up automatically has helped. Startup programs can be found in the StartupItems folder in the Library folder on your hard disk **A** — these are placed there by program installers, so



you may wish to re-install any programs with components installed there.

It also wouldn't hurt to check out your Login Items in the Accounts System Preferences pane for items you no longer need loaded **B** — just click on unnecessary items, then press delete on the keyboard or press the minus button on the screen.

Creating a new user and auto-logging in as that user (or setting a different AutoLogin user if you already have more than one user) will help to determine if there's something in your Home folder which is causing the problem. Open the Accounts System Preferences pane and click on the Login Options button at the bottom of the list of users. Tick "Automatically log in as:", then choose the other user from the popup menu **C** Enter the user's password **D** and then restart. If the problem persists, it's most likely an operating system-level problem, otherwise, it's a user-level problem.

Sleep advice

2

■ Is it better from the point of view of energy usage and “wear and tear” on a computer to put it to sleep when not in use or to shut down and then start fresh the next time it is used? A colleague and I were speaking about this and he recalled being told that it was “gentler” on the components of the computer to use sleep/wake than shut down/restart and there wasn’t much difference in energy use — unless you are away from it for a long time. Do you concur with this?

James Fisher
via internet

The issue of whether to leave a computer on or off is a long-standing one, and I’ve heard conflicting views for at least 20 years.

Some say that the act of turning on a computer is a significant load on items such as power supplies and switches, and that they are more likely to fail because of this wear and tear, and that therefore you should leave your computer turned on as much as possible.

Others contend that items such as hard disks have their failure rates quoted as MTBF (mean time between failures, the average number of operational hours between failures) and that if the device is on for twice as long because it’s not being turned off, that brings the day when it’s reached its MTBF twice as quickly. Screen burn in has also

been long cited as a factor in such considerations. Advocates of this point of view say that therefore you should shut your machine down when it is not being used for any significant length of time.

These days, with less prevalence on physical switches to turn a machine on and advances such as sleep mode and monitors which don’t suffer burn-in, there’s not as compelling an argument in my mind to turn machines off everyday. Shutting the machine down will definitely use less power, but there’s not much in it, and it’s quicker to wake than to boot up and MTBF is measured in the tens or hundreds of thousands of hours.

I tend to suggest people leave their machines on for convenience — but it is ultimately a matter of choice (just like which OS to use).

[Editor’s note: It’s also worth pointing out that OS X, like other versions of Unix, performs a number of routine maintenance tasks automatically. These tasks are scheduled to happen at times when the computer is not in use — in the middle of the night, and on weekends. If your computer is turned off when these scripts are meant to run the performance of the machine may suffer. Of course utilities such as Cocktail (see “Hot links”) make it easy to perform these tasks manually if you wish to leave your Mac turned off routinely. — M.JC.P.]

iTunes disappearing trick

3

■ I’ve encountered continuing problems with iTunes (I’m using iTunes 6.0.4 with Mac OS X v10.3.9). I began by importing my CD collection. I have downloaded a number of items (albums and singles) from iTunes Music Store, and have begun importing my reel-to-reel and cassette collections. Currently, I have 1500+ items. Over time, tracks or entire albums or playlists disappeared entirely from the hard drive. They just mysteriously, randomly and spontaneously delete from the computer, never to be seen again — not even in the Trash.

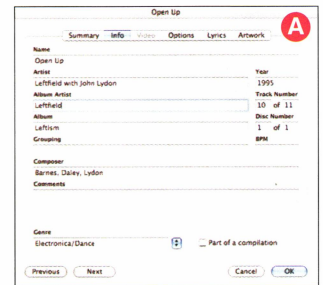
A few days ago, I found four or five hundred items missing — little exclamation marks beside the missing item in the Library and associated Playlists. They are not in the iTunes Folder, nor the Trash (which had incidentally not been emptied). My son’s computer did the same.

Having to import them again and again is tedious and is beginning to turn me off iTunes.

Do any of your other readers experience these phenomena? Should I go back to my trusty 35-year-old reel-to-reel deck and hi fi system?

Alan O’Callaghan
Mooloolah, Qld

This is quite a strange problem, which I’ve never encountered in all of my time using iTunes or supporting other iTunes users. If



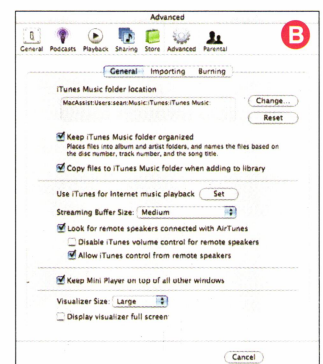
there are other readers with similar problems, we’d definitely love to hear from you.

Since you wrote to us, iTunes 7 has been released, and I’d certainly suggest trying that upgrade first. It also has a better way of handling duets or collaborations by indicating the song’s artist(s), and then specifying the album artist **A**.

I’m also assuming your iTunes library is stored in its default location (the Music folder in your home folder), and that you have the options to “Keep iTunes Music folder organized” and “Copy files to iTunes Music folder when adding to library” ticked **B**?

Next thing to try would be to create a new user and see if that user on your machine also has the same problem, pointing to a system-level rather than user-level problem.

I can imagine how frustrating this problem is for you, Alan — try the above and let us know how you go. If you continue to have problems and/or others are experiencing this problem, we’ll follow up in a later issue.



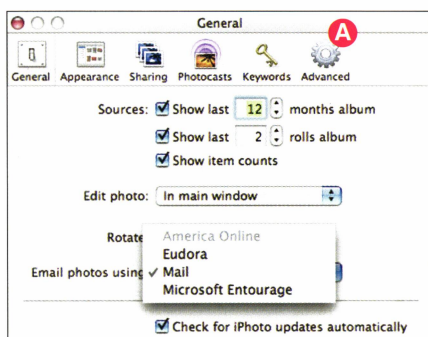
iPhoto vs Entourage

4

■ In the iPhoto 4 toolbar, the e-mail icon “Mail” has been replaced by the icon for Microsoft Entourage (which I don’t use). I want to change it back to Mail but I don’t know how. I like to send photos by e-mail direct from the iPhoto application.

Gerry McGrade

Southport, Queensland



I usually get asked this question the other way 'round, Gerry — “I use Entourage as my e-mail client, but iPhoto wants to use Mail!”

Luckily, for both versions of the question, the answer is simple. Open iPhoto, then choose Preferences from the iPhoto menu **A**, my version is iPhoto 6, but this works for version 4, too).

Choose Mail from the “Email photos using” popup menu, close the Preferences window, and you should be back in business!

More than a button

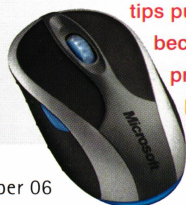
Microsoft Reader tip

■ I have noticed that the toolbar button in every Finder window and some applications' windows actually has a secret functionality. If you click it while holding the **⌘** key, it will cycle through toolbar modes like icon size, show text, or text only modes, instead of just show and hide the toolbar.

Chris Lam
Southport, Qld

Each month, Microsoft gives a free Notebook Optical Mouse valued at \$70 to the Australian Macworld reader who submits the best tip. Sized for mobility and designed to be noticed, Microsoft Notebook Optical Mouse 3000 offers great comfort for either hand and is always good to go. E-mail your tip, together with your name, address and phone number, to matthew.powell@niche.com.au All reader

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Beginners start here

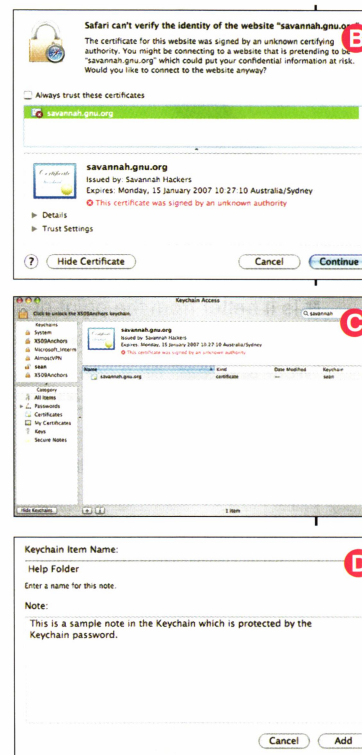
More on Keychains

Last month we looked at the basics of the Keychain — Mac OS X's password saving utility. We're now going to have a look at some of the more advanced features and uses of the Keychain.

The Keychain can store more than just passwords — it can also store certificates to validate the identity of servers on the internet (or other users on the internet). The Keychain comes pre-loaded with the root certificates which allow us to browse to secure web sites without being told that the identity of the web site can't be verified. E-commerce sites use validated certificates to help give people confidence that they are connecting to a site which has proven its credentials to a trusted certifying authority.

Occasionally, you will navigate to a site which doesn't have a verified certificate, but which you want to still trust **A**. As a one-off, you can choose to click the Continue button, but every time you navigate to that site after restarting Safari, you'll be prompted with that message again.

If, however, you want to load the certificate into one of the System Keychains, you can click on Show



Certificate to see the certificate details **B**, and then tick the “Always trust these certificates” tick box — the certificate will then be added to the Keychain for use by all users of the machine **C**.

You can also add notes to the Keychain, which are then protected by the keychain password. Open the Keychain utility, then choose “New Secure Note Item...” from the File menu and enter the note's details (a descriptive title, and then the text of the note, **D**).

Next month, we'll finish our coverage of the Keychain for those who want their passwords to be more secure than the “unlock at login” default behaviour.



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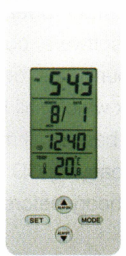
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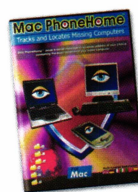
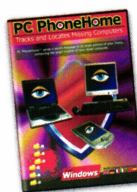
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22921_2



Strike a pose

If you're interested in entering the mystic world of 3D figures and tableaux then Poser software is one of the most accessible and affordable entry cards.

Poser Six Revealed — The Official Guide

by Kelly L. Murdock covers all the foundation skills from basic to intermediate. The 400-page book is set in a spacious landscape format based around a three-column grid with plenty of black and white illustrations. Each chapter begins with the stated objective and a discussion of the task followed by a simplified example of the topic broken down into easy steps. To save you time, Murdock begins each example from Poser's default setting or from a sample file on the Course Technology web site (see "Hot links"). This site also has the final saved files for each example so you can see how you've done. The usual notes, cautions and tips contain bits of special information.

Beneath Poser's simple interface lies a complex range of abilities, which Murdock deals with by limiting each chapter to a defined set of functions. Beginning with an interface tour, she quickly jumps into a section on creating and posing figures, which is — not surprisingly — what Poser does best. Succeeding chapters focus on each of Poser's sections or "rooms" which deal separately with materials, props, lights, cameras, faces, heads, cloth, and bones. You'll create a figure with a face, to which you can add expressions, and then style the hair just as you wish. You'll create scenes and fill them with figures and props and do simple animations. There's even a section on PoserPython script which lets control freaks manipulate every aspect of their universe.

The book deals with both technical and artistic matters side by side. Beginning with the artistic concept behind each task you work through the technical steps to achieve your goal. *Poser Six Revealed* is eminently suited to inexperienced Poser users.

Practical Poser 6, at 500 black-and-white pages with an eight-page colour insert, was written in response to FAQs from members of the on-line Poser community. Generally suitable for beginning to intermediate-level practitioners this title also responds to some questions from advanced users. The accompanying CD contains a generous selection of usable Poser content, images from the book and software demos.



Hot Links

www.course.com/poser6

All you need to know about virtual vogueing

Beginning with the basics of the Poser 6 interface you'll learn how to build scenes in a logical way. You'll also learn how to manipulate lights and cameras to add realism and variety to your scenes. In the face room

you'll create faces from actual photographs and then add realistic hair. Then have some fun by morphing your humanoid into a variety of different shapes and sizes.

As user questions focussed mostly around creating and customising Poser clothing, much of the penultimate section of the book is devoted to this. Here you will learn how to model a simple piece of clothing, how to create UV maps for shirts, skirts and pants and then get them working properly. The final section of the book shows you the rendering techniques you need to make your final creation shine.

Each chapter is based around a number of mini tutorials and although amply illustrated, *Practical Poser 6* is more text-based than the preceding title. Consequently it's most suitable for people who already have some understanding of Poser and aren't fazed by a bit of tech talk.

Secrets of Figure Creation with Poser 5

by the deliciously-named B. L. Render does not encompass the latest version of the software, but still retains cult status in the Poser community and covers previous versions 3, 4 and Pro Pack which still have many devotees. Once again tutorial-based, all materials you will need are on the accompanying CD. And again, each section begins with the theory before you get to try it for yourself.

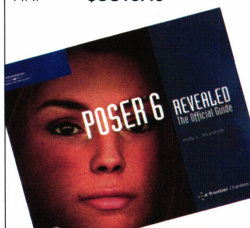
Digest a potted history of Poser and then dive straight into the basic steps of creating and splitting the mesh, defining the hierarchy, setting joint parameters, creating morphs, UV mapping and putting it all together. These basics are treated in more detail in subsequent chapters, which also include an analysis of Poser's sometimes tricky file library system and a nicely targeted troubleshooting section which contains all the classic Poser stuff-ups. Glossy, full-colour illustrations are also helpful in conveying realism to aid your understanding.

The most unashamedly technical of the three titles, *Secrets of Figure Creation* is for people firmly

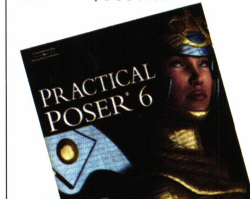
ensconced on the Poser bandwagon who have the time and determination to become masters of their craft. ☞

Keith has been a Mac addict since 1984 and still can't fathom why there is anyone who isn't.

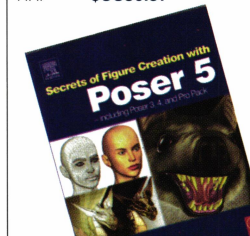
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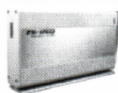
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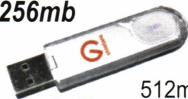
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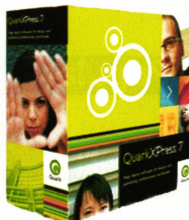
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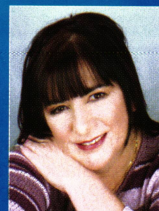
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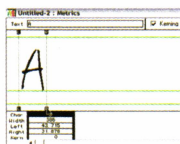
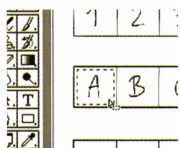
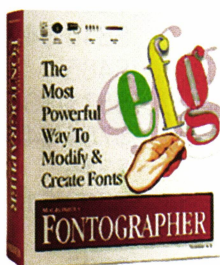
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| Adobe® Creative Suite 2 St from PS | \$899 | Adobe® Pagemaker Indesign Edition | \$649 | IntelliHance Pro | \$199 | Microsoft® Office 2004 Pro | \$59 |
| Adobe® Creative Suite 2 St from CS1 | \$599 | Adobe® Photoshop® CS | \$307 | Macromedia® ColdFusion | P.O.A | Portfolio | \$19 |
| Adobe® Creative Suite 2 Pr from PS | \$1219 | Adobe® Streamline | \$165 | Macromedia® Contribute | \$132 | Pitstop Pro | \$29 |
| Adobe® Creative Suite 2 Pr from CS1 | \$899 | Adobe® Type Manager Del OS9 Mac | \$119 | Macromedia® Director (from 8.5+) | \$599 | QX Tools Pro | \$19 |
| Adobe® Dimension | \$149 | QuarkXpress® v3 to v7 | \$569 | Macromedia® Dreamweaver® 8 | \$299 | Stuffit Deluxe | \$ 5 |
| Adobe® Framemaker - UNIX | \$495 | QuarkXpress® v4 to v7 | \$569 | Macromedia® Flash Pro 8 | \$479 | Suitcase Fusion | \$ 8 |
| Adobe® Framemaker - Windows Only | \$385 | QuarkXpress® v5 to v7 | \$569 | Macromedia® Freehand® Xgrade | \$275 | TechTool Pro XGrade | \$ 9 |
| | | | | | | TechTool Pro | \$11 |

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Ratings key

| | |
|--------------|-------|
| Outstanding | ★★★★★ |
| Very good | ★★★★ |
| Good | ★★★ |
| Flawed | ★★ |
| Unacceptable | ★ |
| Dangerous | ● |



Snap shots

Portable postcard printers show their mettle

THE marketing departments of printer manufacturers noticed that most of us only ever got postcard prints when we dropped off the film to the photo lab, so they decided to offer us the digital photo equivalent. Never mind that we probably already have a perfectly good printer capable of making postcard prints – an opportunity to match the size, quality and convenience of the prints we used to get from the lab was just too good to ignore.

To approach the quality of photographic prints, many of them used the dye-sublimation process which was, until recently, inherently more stable than the available inkjet process. Dye-sublimation uses special paper and a three-colour ribbon to layer the image, in three passes through the printer, then finishes with a final pass of clear lacquer to protect from spills and fingerprints. Several printer vendors jumped aboard the dye-sub wagon, but the process is inherently expensive so most only offer postcard-size printers. AMW Lab looked at dye-sub printers from Canon, Kodak, Samsung and Sony.

Kodak also produces larger models, with price-tags to match, and Olympus used to offer an A4 model but has since abandoned this market. The price of the postcard dye-subbers hovers around \$200-\$300, about the same money as a half-decent A4 inkjet all-in-one printer, that can also print postcard size prints. The hook to get you to spend the extra money is a 60-second print speed for borderless prints and the durable bright and glossy photos. Vendors who decided not to play in the dye-sub market spent their research money making their inkjets produce prints that don't fade like the ones of yesteryear, and competing on the price of the printing process.

Test drive.

We evaluate, rigorously test and give detailed assessments of new-release software and hardware.



| | Sony DPP-FP55 PictureStation | Canon SELPHY CP730 | Kodak EasyShare Photo Printer 500 | Kodak Professional 1400 |
|---------------|--|---|--|--|
| ■ Type | Dye-sub photo printer | | | |
| ■ Rating | ★★★★ | ★★★★ 1/2 | ★★★★ | ★★★★ |
| ■ Pros | Sony brand | Bluetooth option, battery option, built-in camera USB cable | Large LCD screen, WiFi option | Superb A4 sized dye-sublimation prints |
| ■ Cons | Expensive | No real vices | Expensive | Only suitable for photos |
| ■ Ports | USB, camera cards, PictBridge | USB, camera cards, PictBridge, IR | USB, camera cards, PictBridge, Bluetooth | USB |
| ■ SRP | \$279 | \$199 | \$299 | \$900 |
| ■ Distributor | Sony Australia 1300 137 669 | Canon Australia 02 9805 2000 | Kodak Australia 1800 267 588 | Kodak Australia 1800 267 588 |
| ■ Reviewer | Ian Yates | | | |
| ■ Hot links | www.sony.com.au | www.canon.com.au | www.kodak.com.au | www.kodak.com.au |



The average dye-sub postcard costs around 50c per print, while the inkjet equivalent can be had for about 30c or less. If you can wait a day or so to look at your prints, you can instead upload your images to a photo lab and get genuine photographic prints for even less than 30c. If you have the time to visit the photo lab, most now have in-store facilities to connect your camera or memory card and upload your images on the spot. You then go shopping or have a cup of coffee while the lab produces the prints. However, nothing beats the convenience of being able to print your photos instantly wherever you are – the modern day equivalent of the old Polaroid psychology.

The makers of inkjet postcard printers also market their wares as portable, and AMW Lab looked at offerings from Epson, HP and Lexmark which are all lunch-box shaped with a fold down handle to make it easier to tote. The four dye-sub postcard printers are all a fair bit smaller, about the size of a Mac mini,

but with no carry handles provided. However, in operation the dye-sub printers all need a postcard-sized paper tray sticking out the front, so they occupy more real estate than the inkjets when printing.

All of these cameras lay claim to portability – they feature slots for all manner of memory cards and all support PictBridge for direct connection to a camera, so you don't need your Mac to use them. However, these printers still require a 240V outlet nearby to plug in their external power packs. Only the Canon dye-sub can claim to be truly portable with the addition of the optional \$99 battery pack which clips to the rear of the printer, allowing you to print your images literally anywhere you happen to be – until the batteries run out. (Epson's PictureMate 250, identical to the 210 but with a battery pack, was released too late to be included in this test.) All these printers will also work when attached to a Windows PC, so if you decide to take one to a party, you can connect to whatever your host uses.



Dye-sub. The four dye-sub printers all look remarkably similar and indeed some of the pieces are interchangeable between vendors, so it's highly likely they all come from the same patent, and some may even be made in the same factories. The price of the consumables is also nearly identical, supplied as a ribbon cartridge and one or more packets of paper, matched to the length of the ribbon, which can't be re-used. Each of the four printers took roughly the same time to produce a print: between 60 and 90 seconds. Print speed isn't determined by the image being printed, it depends on the speed of the printer's innards.

The variation in price between the dye-sub tested comes down to LCD size and connectivity options. The more expensive Kodak 500 has the biggest LCD and built-in Bluetooth, with optional

| Samsung SPP-2040 | Epson PictureMate 210 | HP Photosmart 475 | Lexmark P350 |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| Inkjet photo printer | | | |
| ■■■■ | ■■■■ | ■■■ 1/2 | ■■■■ 1/2 |
| Bluetooth option | Carry handle | Internal 1.5GB memory, remote control, AV out | Carry handle, low price |
| Expensive | Quite large | Expensive, slow printing | Quite large |
| USB, camera cards, PictBridge | USB, camera cards, PictBridge | USB, camera cards, PictBridge, AV | USB, camera cards, PictBridge |
| \$299 | \$249 | \$499 | \$179 |
| Samsung 02 9957 5655 | Epson Australia 02 8899 3666 | HP Australia 1300 304 889 | Lexmark Australia 02 9930 3500 |
| www.samsung.com.au | www.epson.com.au | www.hp.com.au | www.lexmark.com.au |



WiFi. Kodak also sells a model with no LCD (the Kodak Dock 3, pictured on page 75) for \$100 less, which has a socket on the top where you park your Kodak camera. You then use the LCD on the camera to choose the photos you want to print while the printer also charges your camera batteries. Several Nikon digital cameras also come with the Kodak printer socket underneath. The cheapest of the dye-sub is the Canon CP730, which retails for \$199 and can be acquired for around \$179 at online shops.

Inkjets. Although the three inkjets all use the lunchbox form factor they are obviously physically quite different from each other. The difference in price again comes down to additional features, with the Lexmark offering the basics and the HP providing 1.5GB of internal memory to dump your camera contents while out and about – presuming you're out and about where there's a 240V socket. This internal memory was probably a good idea when camera cards were all 64MB but in these days of near-standard 1GB cards the appeal isn't so obvious. The HP also took around four minutes to produce a postcard print so you're certainly not paying extra for speed. Both the Lexmark and the Epson managed to match the dye-sub at between 60 and 90 seconds, this time depending on the image size.

Inkjet vendors are also keen to match the convenience of the dye-sub and they all offer combined ink-and-paper bundles so you'll only ever run out of both at the same time. The price of these bundles is very close to the price of plain packets of photo paper without ink, so they represent a genuine saving.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. As far as print quality goes, the dye-sub no longer have the game all to them-

selves. In a blind test we were unable to pick the difference consistently on quality alone, and the inkjet makers claim their new inks and papers will last as long as photographic prints. AMW Lab left all the prints in the sun for a few days and none of them faded noticeably, but how long they would really last is beyond our capacity to test. Suffice to say the fine print on the packets suggests maximum longevity is achieved by placing your photos in an album between acid-free leaves of paper, and then placing it in a dark place.

If your reason for coveting one of these printers is maximum portability then the choice is clear: get the Canon with its optional battery. If you want the cheapest solution the Lexmark wins the price-sticker war and is cheaper to feed than the dye-sub. Of course, even cheaper would be a packet of postcard paper for your existing printer, and even cheaper again is the photo lab option. It all depends what price you attach to convenience. 🐘



| | |
|----------------|--|
| ■ Type | All-in-one desktop computer |
| ■ Rating | ★★★★½ |
| ■ Pros | Bright 24-inch display; strong application performance; impressive graphics system; FireWire 800 port for fast peripheral connection |
| ■ Cons | 3GB RAM limit; lack of free RAM slot makes for costlier memory upgrades; limited internal expansion options |
| ■ RRP | \$2999 |
| ■ Manufacturer | Apple Computer |
| ■ Distributor | Apple Australia 133 622 |
| ■ Reviewer | Jonathan Seff |
| ■ Hot links | www.apple.com/au/imac |

24-inch iMac Core 2 Duo/2.16GHz

Huge screen, great performance

The iMac was originally conceived as a relatively compact all-in-one computer, and that was a large part of its appeal. Compact, however, is not the word most people would use to describe the 24-inch iMac, which features the latest Apple technology packed behind a massive flat-panel display. For people who want a fairly professional system without making the jump to a Mac Pro, the new large-screen iMac fills a tempting middle ground. It gives you impressive performance, but without the expansion options of a pro tower.

The (really) big picture. Sitting on a desk, the 24-inch iMac is monumental. Its large, widescreen display offers a resolution of 1920×1200 pixels, the same as Apple's 23-inch Cinema HD Display. As with Apple's 23-inch display, the iMac has enough

resolution to show off many windows, palettes, and every pixel of full 1080 high-definition video (with some vertical pixels left over for good measure). Compared to the previous largest iMac, the 20-inch model, this one has 30 percent more pixels.

As with most of Apple's new displays, though, the 24-inch iMac isn't just about gaining more screen real estate. Its display is roughly 43 percent brighter than the new 20-inch model, with the same 400 candelas per square metre (also called nits) as Apple's 23-inch and 30-inch displays. The brightness of this screen is very pleasing.

Even with the gigantic display, however, the iMac feels sturdy and well balanced. With its thin design, the iMac weighs only 11.2kg, just 1.2kg more than the 20-inch model.

What's inside. The 24-inch iMac has a 64-bit, 2.16GHz Intel Core 2 Duo processor with 4MB of shared L2 cache (twice the cache of the Core Duo iMacs), connected to the system with a 667MHz frontside bus. It comes standard with 1GB of 667MHz DDR2 SDRAM, although that RAM is split between two 512MB DIMMs. This means any subsequent upgrades will require tossing at least one of the DIMMs to make room, making upgrades more expensive. Also, the Intel chipset that Apple uses in the iMac means the operating system can address only 3GB of RAM, even if you were to put two 2GB DIMMs inside.

The iMac also comes with a 250GB Serial ATA hard drive, an 8x double-layer SuperDrive, and Nvidia GeForce 7300 GT graphics with 128MB of GDDR3 memory. It includes built-in AirPort Extreme and Bluetooth 2.0 wireless networking, mini-DVI video output, an iSight camera, an Apple Remote, three USB 2.0 ports, (plus two USB 1.1 ports on the keyboard) one FireWire 400 port, one FireWire 800 port (good for swift connection to storage devices), Gigabit Ethernet, and combo ports for analogue and digital audio input and output (previous iMacs had analogue-only audio input).

Core 2 Duo iMac benchmarks

| | Speedmark 4.5 OVERALL SCORE | Adobe Photoshop CS2 SUITE | Cinema 4D XL 9.5.21 RENDER | Compressor 2.1 MPEG2 Encode | iMovie 6.0.2 AGED EFFECT | iTunes 6.0.4 MP3 ENCODE | Unreal Tournament 2004 FRAME RATE 1024 x 768 | Finder ZIP ARCHIVE |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| 24-inch iMac Core 2 Duo/2.33GHz* | 259 | 1:47 | 0:57 | 2:12 | 0:48 | 0:56 | 83.6 | 2:15 |
| 24-inch iMac Core 2 Duo/2.16GHz | 245 | 1:55 | 1:01 | 2:25 | 0:51 | 1:06 | 79.3 | 2:22 |
| 20-inch iMac Core 2 Duo/2.16GHz | 245 | 1:55 | 1:01 | 2:37 | 0:52 | 1:03 | 74.4 | 2:22 |
| 17-inch iMac Core 2 Duo/2GHz | 232 | 2:04 | 1:06 | 2:50 | 0:57 | 1:03 | 65.5 | 2:34 |
| 17-inch iMac Core 2 Duo/1.83GHz | 202 | 2:17 | 1:13 | 3:07 | 1:02 | 1:10 | 21.7 | 2:46 |
| 20-inch iMac Core Duo/2GHz | <i>210</i> | <i>2:31</i> | <i>1:11</i> | <i>3:21</i> | <i>1:03</i> | <i>1:26</i> | <i>54.1</i> | <i>2:34</i> |
| Mac Pro/2GHz | <i>254</i> | <i>1:50</i> | 0:37 | 1:57 | 0:48 | <i>0:59</i> | <i>73.4</i> | <i>2:32</i> |
| | > Better | < Better | < Better | < Better | < Better | < Better | > Better | < Better |

Best results in **bold**. Reference system in *italics*. * denotes build-to-order model with upgraded video card.

Speedmark 4.5 scores are relative to those of a 1.25GHz Mac mini, which is assigned a score of 100. Adobe Photoshop, Cinema 4D XL, iMovie, iTunes, and Finder scores are in minutes:seconds. All systems were running Mac OS X 10.4.7 with 1GB of RAM, with processor performance set to Highest in the Energy Saver preference pane when applicable. The Photoshop Suite test is a set of 14 scripted tasks using a 50MB file. Photoshop's memory was set to 70 percent and History was set to Minimum. We recorded how long it took to render a scene in Cinema 4D XL. We used Compressor to encode a 6minute:26second DV file using the DVD: Fastest Encode 120 minutes - 4:3 setting. In iMovie, we applied the Aged video effect to a 1-minute movie. We converted 45 minutes of AAC audio files to MP3 using iTunes' High Quality setting. We used Unreal Tournament 2004's Antalus Botmatch average-frames-per-second score; we tested at a resolution of 1024 x 768 pixels at the Maximum setting with both audio and graphics enabled. We created a Zip archive in the Finder from a 1GB folder. — Macworld Lab testing by James Galbraith and Jerry Jung



Performance. To see how well the top-of-the-line iMac performs, Macworld Lab put it through our standard suite of tests. The 24-inch iMac garnered an impressive Speedmark score of 245, only nine points below the 2GHz Mac Pro (not surprisingly, the 24-inch iMac earned the same Speedmark score as the new 20-inch model, which has the same processor).

Judging from the test scores, the 24-inch iMac seems to bridge the performance gap between standard iMacs and Mac Pros. Compared to the previous high-end iMac – the 20-inch 2.0GHz Core Duo model – the 24-inch iMac showed a nearly 17 percent overall Speedmark improvement. Most impressively, our MPEG-2 encoding test using Apple's Compressor was 28 percent faster than the old 20-inch model, and the Cinema 4D Render test showed a 14 percent jump – good numbers for pro-level use.


Another big improvement is that the new iMac pumped out more than 25 additional frames per second in our Unreal Tournament test, a nearly 47 percent boost in frame rate over the 20-inch Core Duo model. The included Nvidia graphics chip is good news for anyone who likes to play games. (Users interested

in the best performance can replace the 7300 GT with the GeForce 7600 GT with 256MB of video memory for an additional \$195, making this the first iMac with an option to upgrade to a different graphics processor.)

As with all current Macs, software that hasn't been updated to run natively on Intel processors runs more slowly than it would on a PowerPC chip. Even so, the new iMac completed our suite of 14 tasks using Adobe Photoshop CS2 in 24 percent less time than the old 20-inch model – a respectable jump.

Quick operations. For general operations, the 24-inch iMac's overall responsiveness was excellent. Opening, dragging, and resizing windows was very quick. HD video playback was smooth, and working in Intel-native applications such as Final Cut Pro, Motion, iMovie, and iWeb was snappy. (You can custom configure a 24-inch model with a 2.33GHz Core 2 Duo processor for an extra \$395. Our benchmark chart shows the performance improvements you'll see with this faster chip.)

The 24-inch iMac also has an upgraded sound system, with a 24-watt digital amplifier (twice that of the other models) to power the built-in stereo speakers. The sound was much louder than on any other iMac I've used – useful for, say, watching a movie from across the room – and it had fairly good quality. (Audiophiles will still probably want a separate set of powered computer speakers or want to connect the iMac's digital audio output to a good home-theatre system.)

Australian Macworld's buying advice. The 24-inch iMac occupies the vast stretch between the smaller iMacs and the Mac Pro. Since it scores basically the same as the 20-inch iMac, the \$700 difference gives you a larger and brighter display, a FireWire 800 port, and a better graphics system. Compared to the Mac Pro, you gain a built-in display and a degree of portability, but you sacrifice the Mac Pro's quad processing and significant internal expansion options. If you're looking for the ultimate iMac with a taste of the pro-level features the Mac Pro provides, you'll find the 24-inch iMac to be the perfect middle ground. 



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| | |
|---------------|---|
| ■ Type | Brainstorming application |
| ■ Rating | ★★★★ |
| ■ Pros | Quick and easy brainstorming tool; easy to reorganise and format information after brainstorming session; ability to attach or link to external documents |
| ■ Cons | Some features available in PC version unavailable on Mac |
| ■ OS X | 10.4 |
| ■ Processor | Universal |
| ■ RRP | \$330 for download version; \$346.50 for a boxed copy including shipping |
| ■ Publisher | MindJet |
| ■ Distributor | Mindsystems 1300 738 602 |
| ■ Reviewer | Jeffery Battersby |
| ■ Hot links | www.mindjet.com |

MindManager 6

Spins a web of ideas

WEBBING, also known as mind mapping, is a non-linear graphical organisation technique for brainstorming a story idea, process, or concept. It is a common tool used everywhere from elementary schools to Fortune 500 companies. When you web an idea, you start with a central topic and then quickly add several branches. Once an initial web is created, each of the individual branches can be mined further to generate sub-ideas.

MindManager 6.0.4 Mac is a visual organisational tool that you can use to collect and organise – or web – a variety of ideas that may have a single obvious theme, but that may not have obvious, direct relationships to each other. Similar to NovaMind Software's NovaMind, MindManager allows you to sequence complex ideas into an easily understandable form and gives you the ability to link documents, images, timelines, and organisational charts to your idea maps, making a range of information available in a single document.

MindManager 6 is the Mac version of a product that's been available on Windows for about 12 years. Rather than doing a

Web slinger. MindManager makes it easy to brainstorm and then visually organise your ideas into a coherent plan of action.

straight port from the Windows version to the Mac, Mindjet built a brand new application, paying strict attention to Apple's design guidelines, making MindManager feel as familiar as Apple's Pages and Keynote.

MindManager ships with seven pre-defined templates for creating standard maps, such as organisational charts and to-do lists, but the strength of the program is really unleashed when you start with a completely blank document and let the ideas roll out of your head and onto the page. Hitting the return key creates new sub-topics from the main topic. Holding down the ⌘ key while pressing return creates a new sub-topic from the currently selected sub-topic, making it easy to let the ideas flow. This is similar to features found in other mind-mapping programs, which often have hot keys for creating new topics and sub-topics.


Once you've finished your initial brainstorming session, it's easy to go back and format or reorganise the information in a more precise manner. You can change the colours of topics, move them around the map, rearrange topic levels, add priority or completion levels to each item, and even add documents, images, graphics, or notes to any item on the page. All of these changes can be accomplished easily, typically with the click of a single button. And, while it is possible to add web-page hyperlinks or links to external documents, it is also possible to attach entire documents or images to your mind map so it becomes a repository for all the files associated with a project.

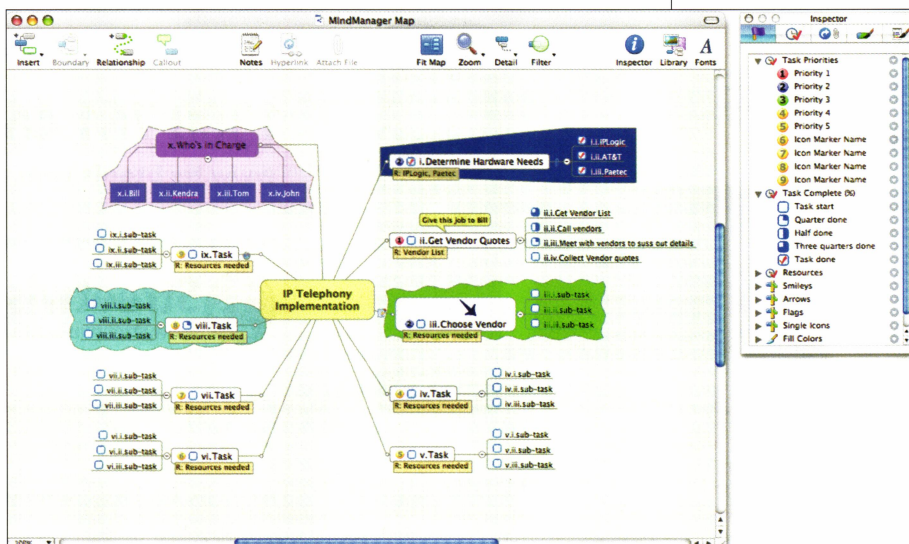
Once you've created your map, you can easily share it by exporting it as a PDF, JPG, TIFF, or PNG file. Or, you can export the entire map in outline form, including all your notes, as text. Better yet, Mindjet offers a free viewer on its web site that allows you to view and print your mind map. Using the viewer also allows other people to open attached documents, provided they have the applications necessary to view the attached documents.

MindManager's XML-based file format is compatible across platforms, but the company acknowledges that the Windows version has more functionality than the Mac version, in particular in the realm of Microsoft Office integration. For example, if you were to attach an Excel spreadsheet to your document, you can actually manipulate the data from within MindManager with the Windows version. In the Mac version, the spreadsheet is read-only – you

can't change anything without opening Excel. This is a minor shortcoming to an otherwise excellent program.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. Mindjet's MindManager 6.0.4

offers an elegant user interface and excellent tools for brainstorming, webbing, and mapping everything from major projects to simple school reports. The program provides myriad ways to organise your ideas graphically and share them with colleagues and collaborators. While this initial Mac release lacks some features found in the Windows version, the program is a strong addition to the existing slate of Mac brainstorming apps. 



| | |
|---------------|--|
| ■ Type | Music utility |
| ■ Rating | ★★★★½ |
| ■ Pros | OnStage is good for managing live sets; friendly interface; ideal for working with plug-ins; can combine music with live, 3D visuals |
| ■ Cons | No internal MIDI recording; not useful with software like Logic and Live |
| ■ OS X | 10.4 |
| ■ Processor | Universal |
| ■ RRP | \$US50; band license \$US100 |
| ■ Publisher | plasq |
| ■ Distributor | Available online |
| ■ Reviewer | Peter Kirn |
| ■ Hot links | www.plasq.com |

Rax 2.0

Use plug-ins to play on stage and off


RAX 2.0, brings the same kind of easy access to virtual musical instruments and effects plug-ins that Apple's Front Row provides for music, videos, and photos. This radically redesigned new version makes playing live music with your Mac easier than ever before.

Managing instruments and effects. The primary screen in Rax is a virtual mixer, into which you can easily add Audio Unit (AU)-format instrument and effects plug-ins, like Native

Instruments Kontakt or iZotope Trash. That means, unfortunately, that Rax won't work with the instruments built into software like GarageBand 3, Logic Pro 7, and Ableton Live 4, though you can use MIDI synchronisation via MIDI clock messages to run Rax alongside those programs.

Rax's strong suit is its ability to manage and switch between combinations of plug-ins. You can set up sets of songs in advance, which might include layered and split synthesiser plug-ins or different sets of software effects for a guitarist or vocalist. Each song can include text notations, MIDI files, and presets. The one thing you can't do is record MIDI, meaning you'll still need to use a program like GarageBand for sequencing.

Going OnStage. Musicians have been reluctant to take laptops on stage because it's a difficult place to use a mouse. Rax's solution is OnStage, a full-screen mode with visual feedback you can see at a glance, and the ability to switch between your song settings via mouse, keyboard, a MIDI controller, or your Apple Remote.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. If you're looking for easy access to music plug-ins without a lot of distractions, or need a quick way to select virtual instruments and effects on stage, plasq's Rax 2.0 is a must-buy. Its major drawback is that you can't use it if you rely only on features like the live loop playback of Ableton Live or the extensive set of instruments and effects in Logic Pro. 

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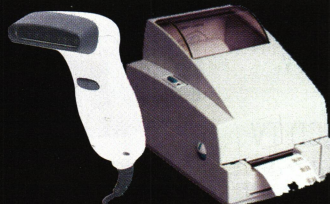
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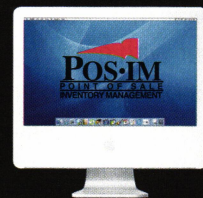
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| | |
|---------------|---|
| ■ Type | Screenwriting software |
| ■ Rating | ★★ |
| ■ Pros | Nice, intuitive interface; good outlining tools |
| ■ Cons | Missing pro features that track changes and drafts, lock pages, create production scripts, and number scenes; buggy |
| ■ OS X | 10.3 or later |
| ■ Processor | Universal |
| ■ RRP | \$239 |
| ■ Publisher | Mariner Software |
| ■ Distributor | MacSense 02 9798 3288 |
| ■ Reviewer | Anton Linecker |
| ■ Hot links | www.marinersoftware.com |

Montage 1.0

Misses the mark

IF scriptwriting programs were cars, Mariner Software's Montage 1.0.2 would be a turbo Mercedes with GPS and a six-DVD changer – but no reverse gear. As nice as it's made the interface – particularly how intuitive it is to navigate – in its current version Mariner has missed the fundamentals of screenwriting, making this software an impractical choice for professionals, and only marginally useful to wannabes. That said, Montage makes a bold statement with its approach, and with

future upgrades it may indeed rival the current screenwriting standard, Final Draft 7.1.2.

A simple word processing program can keep dialogue, scenes, and action properly formatted; you can accomplish proper formatting with Microsoft Word, for example, and even Apple's Pages has a screenplay layout. Montage handles this well enough, making it possible to write a script from scratch. If you were inclined to write a spec script, Montage could work for you. However, true screenwriting software needs additional features.

The bulk of a working screenwriter's life is not spent on writing first drafts, but on rewriting and polishing scripts, while keeping track of changes. In this respect, Montage falls flat. Features that track changes and drafts, lock pages (which sets page count and allows for a versioning scheme), create production scripts, and number scenes – industry-standard elements of screenwriting – are all missing from this initial release. Working screenwriters can't get through a day without these tools.

Mariner acknowledges the importance of these features, and says it plans to add them in a future update.

Bugs are routine with many new applications. Sometimes, even veteran software can be bug-heavy, like rival Final Draft's 7.0's early release (which also, incidentally, earned only a two-mouse rating), and Montage has its share. For example, Montage behaved oddly when I was editing a document. The cursor often would jump a number of lines down the text when I inserted a Scene Heading; sometimes, it would jump to the

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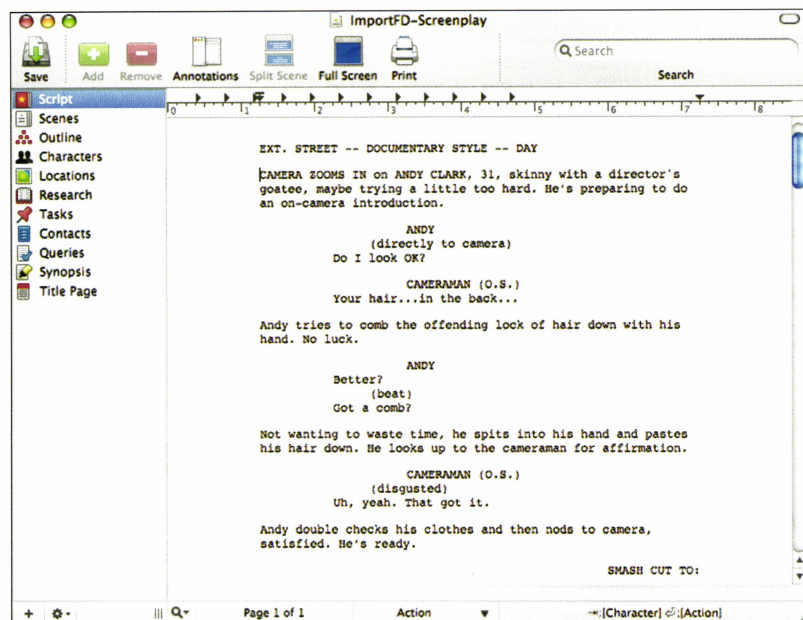
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Fade in. Montage gives you quick access to your outline, contacts, synopsis and other helpful tools.

end of the document when I deleted a section of text. Or, when you make global changes to the document formatting, like changing the margins for Action text, the change appears only on the text you enter after you've made the change — and not

on the preceding pages (though in some cases, the document printed correctly despite what I saw on screen).

Montage can import scripts from Final Draft and RTF files. For me, this was a hit or miss exercise, as the resulting text had significant formatting errors when using some templates. For example, importing a Final Draft document into the normal Screenplay template worked correctly, but it was incorrect in Screenplay (Warner Bros.) template. Another inconvenience: Montage does not have the ability to export back to Final Draft.

Mariner designed Montage as a departure from the constraints of Final Draft, and it has delivered on some fronts. The Outlining and Synopsis parts of the program, both well-designed and conducive to brainstorming, are nice additions. Plus, in the Contacts section, Montage lets you track your script submissions. It also integrates with Apple's Address Book to store client information.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. Montage 1.0.2 feels like it was born prematurely. Seasoned screenwriters won't find the tools they need in this initial release, and it was rather buggy. The software does show promise, and perhaps with some additional updates, it will steal some of Final Draft's thunder.

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| ■ Rating | ★★★★½ |
| ■ Pros | Category system provides fast, accurate photo searches; excellent backup tools |
| ■ Cons | Some annoying interface features; occasionally incomplete Help files; expensive Pro version |
| ■ OS X | 10.3 or later |
| ■ RRP | Universal |
| ■ RRP | \$US80; Express version \$US30 |
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Shoebox 1.6

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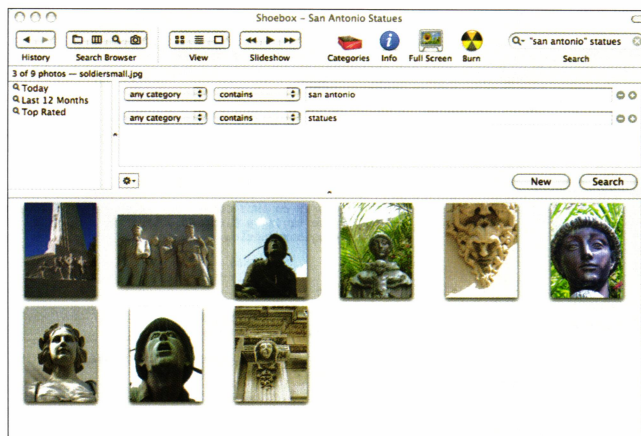
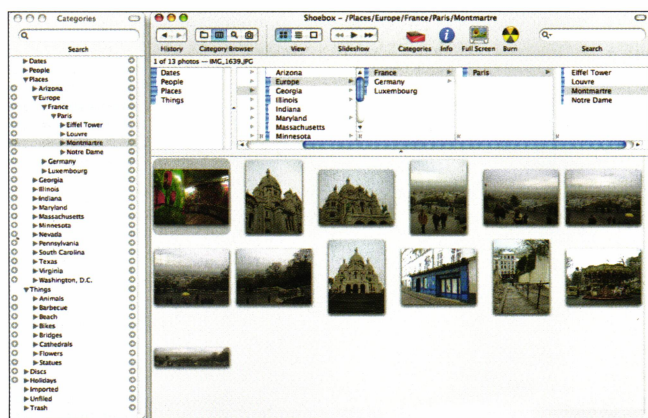
KAVASOFT'S Shoebox 1.6.1 is an excellent tool for cataloguing large digital photo collections. Its Pro version (the one I reviewed) seems a bit pricey, but Shoebox's ability to organise, search, and back up thousands of snapshots is truly impressive.

Shoebox can incorporate photos from hard drives, camera memory cards, CDs or DVDs, or from Canto Software's Cumulus, a digital asset management service. (The program's help files on this last feature are strangely incomplete). It doesn't move the photo files it's cataloguing, and it easily imports images, keywords, and album names from iPhoto. Note that Shoebox does not offer tools to edit or adjust your photos; it's designed to complement programs like Photoshop, not to replace an image editor.

Shoebox's greatest advantage is its category system. It's easy to create custom categories like Parents, Cars, or Europe, and apply them to multiple photos with a single click — a process that's far simpler than typing the same words or phrases over and over in iPhoto's Comments field.

Shoebox's hierarchical categories function as a more powerful form of keywords. For example, you can nest the keywords Tigers, Rhinos, and Lions inside the category Animals. So, if you tag a photo with the word Tigers, and then search for Animals, Spotlight will display the photo tagged Tigers as part of the

Where's Wally? Shoebox's hierarchical categories let you teach the program that Montmartre is a neighbourhood in Paris, France.



Remember the Alamo? Shoebox makes it easy to search for photos in multiple categories — for example, all the pictures of statues in San Antonio, Texas.

results. Kavasoft offers free category collections for download from its web site, including US, European and Australian states and cities, animals, and pro sports teams.


Shoebox keeps its own list of which keywords you assign to which photos, and a menu command lets you export the keywords you've attached to each photo into the Spotlight Comments field of that image file. (You can also automate this process in Shoebox's preferences.)

Categorising photos can take hours, but it's otherwise fairly painless. You can add or remove categories to the list in the Category window at the left of the screen, or type new or existing category names into the Info window on the right. Clicking once to bring either window into focus, then again to add or change a category, quickly gets tedious, but it's a minor nuisance. You can also import or export category lists to or from HTML, XML, or specially formatted plain-text outlines.

Once you finish categorising your photos, you can search huge catalogues in seconds — for example, viewing all photos tagged as Paris and Statues.

Shoebox lets you create multiple catalogues, including password-protected private ones, although the program can open only one catalogue at a time. Unlike the more expensive Pro version, Shoebox's Express version limits users to two catalogues containing no more than 10,000 photos each.

Backing up photos to a CD or DVD via Shoebox is fast and easy. Photos can be automatically compressed after backup to save disk space, and then restored as needed from the backed-up originals in seconds. Kavasoft also promises a Shoebox update that will allow users to publish their own searchable, categorised web galleries.

Australian Macworld's buying advice. Novice shutterbugs who want an easy way to store and edit their photos, have a relatively small collection of images, or don't need the sophisticated backup system of Shoebox 1.6.1, will likely be happy with iPhoto. Photo pros using the Adobe Bridge file-management program may also find Shoebox's features redundant, although its keyword system seems easier and more intuitive than Bridge's. Intermediate photo fans who need a friendly, relatively inexpensive way to catalogue, search, and back up their images will find Shoebox invaluable. 

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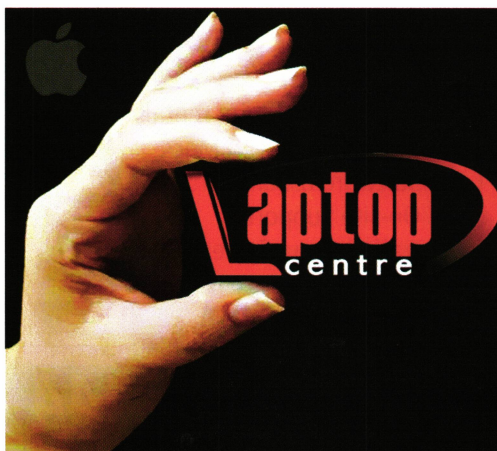


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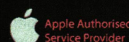
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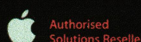
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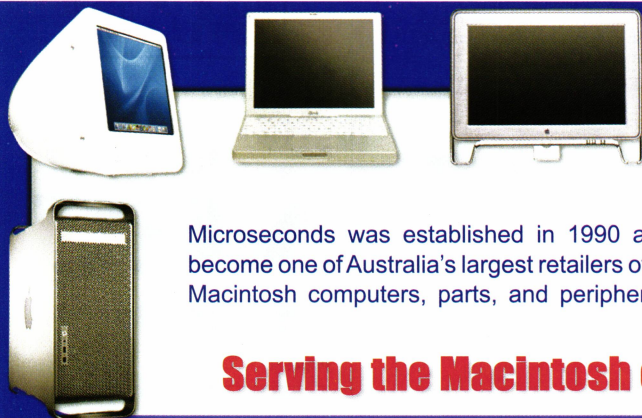
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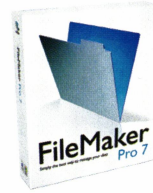
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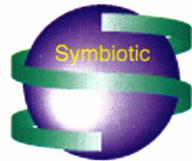


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Something to chew on.

By Alex Rieneck.

We'll always have Paris

I was shambling into one of Sydney's larger record stores when I realised that I was being checked out. I felt that odd feeling that you feel when you are being stared at hard by someone, and when I looked up, this young guy dressed all in black with bleach-blond hair was staring at me in a surreptitious version of what romance novels would probably call a "burning intensity". I was taken rather aback. One minute, I inhabited my normal life. The next, I was apparently at some sort of fork in the road where I could suddenly be one of the real-world stars of an (admittedly rather odd) Merchant-Ivory bodice ripper.

It was an idea that took some getting used to. So, functioning entirely on autopilot, I followed the alphabet and found the CD I had come in to look at all those long, disturbingly soft-focus seconds ago. It was Paris Hilton's "Paris" album, and it was a reassuringly solid object in my hands in a suddenly flexible sort of universe. Things had changed. The guy looked at me, and then at the CD in my hands with a kind of nauseous horror for several seconds before he turned and practically ran out of the shop. Merchant-Ivory became Woody Allen. "Great" I thought, looking at his retreating back, "a music snob." Oddly, I felt rather Jennifer Aniston.

It was pretty stupid, really. As it happened I had already bought most of the "Paris" album off the iTunes Store earlier in the week, and I simply wanted to see what the album looked like as a solid object, as opposed to a purely digital one, and, as usual, the real world had shown me that it was a far, far more complex proposition than the online one.

After all, it suddenly occurred to me, when I bought the Paris Hilton tracks online I had dealt with an impersonal interface. I had not had to deal with the barely stifled chortles of some pimply shopgirl with a ring through her nose, or with the Olympian contempt of some misunderstood music pundit who had been forced into moonlighting as a cash register operator while studying "Importantology" at university. I looked over at the cash desk and saw those two exact people bopping along to something that sounded like a walrus swallowing a chainsaw. I suddenly thought of Doctor Smith in *Lost in Space* saying "Spare me your barbs" and silently thanked the iTunes Store before wandering off, out into the street.

When I got home, I watched the San Francisco event webcast and discovered that Apple had just released a whole bunch of new iPods,



Hot Links

www.meredithmonk.org/

Yes, there are lyrics

www.lostinspace.tv.com/

The pain, the pain

all far more splendid than mine. As a sort of consolation prize it had also released iTunes 7.0. In a spirit of wanting something free to make up for the fact that it was — somehow — Apple's fault that my iPod isn't brand new shiny aluminium, I downloaded it and took it for a test toast.

I was lost within minutes. I feel strange admitting that I stayed up that night until almost three o'clock fine-tuning my iTunes library and finding the best possible cover art for all of my albums. It was dead weird. The "Cover Flow" view switched my head from a state of seeing my music as something like an XML database into being well, a music collection. I sat in my chair, and somehow iTunes became a series of

milk crates filled with beautiful unscuffed albums, which I examined closely, one after the other, to no real purpose, until long after sensible people had gone to bed. It was a nostalgia trip. Man.

It was the next morning that I found out that just about everyone I know had apparently tried taking the same nostalgia trip and had ended up cursing iTunes 7.0 as if it was some form of cheap bathtub gin. According to the editor of this very magazine, I was the only person he

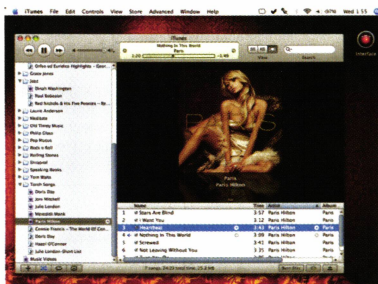
knew of, aside from employees of Apple, who had had no problems with it.

"Weird," I thought, and went back to looking for lyrics to Meredith Monk songs. It was as if with one relatively minor change to iTunes, the program had morphed into something completely different. There was no question that I still wanted to buy the physical version of the "Paris" album, with its bonus DVD in all its shiny physical reality, but at the same time iTunes was providing a close virtual-world alternative that would never get coffee spilt on it nor suffer any of the vicissitudes of residing in a real world milk crate.

As a matter of fact, the more I thought about it, the more I was struck with how Apple had identified a purely aesthetic and emotional lack in its software and had then directly addressed it, thereby changing the idea behind the software almost out of all recognition. I can't see that there was much in the way of money in the change, but I can see that there was something a very great deal like love. And everybody knows love is a dangerous emotion.

Good stuff. ☺

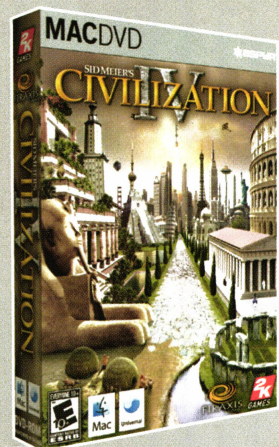
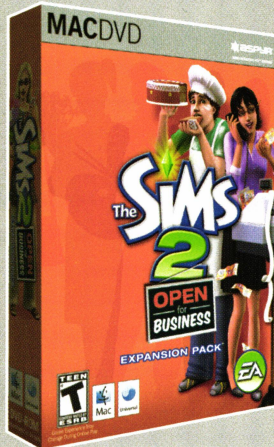
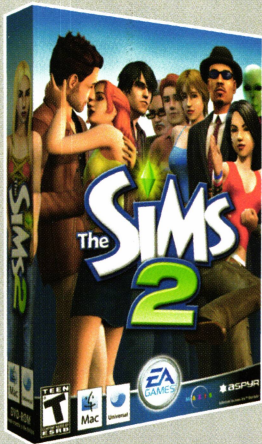
Alex Rieneck has been a technology commentator since the days of the bone abacus.



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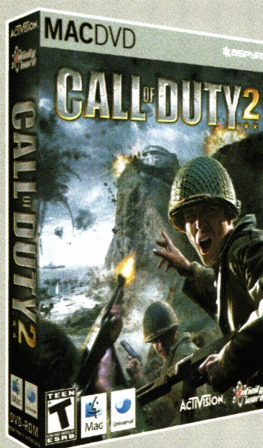
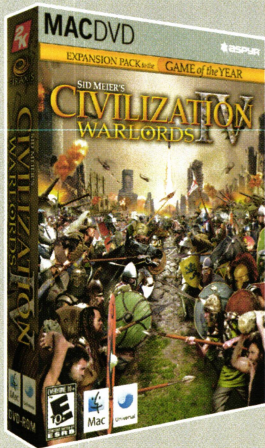
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